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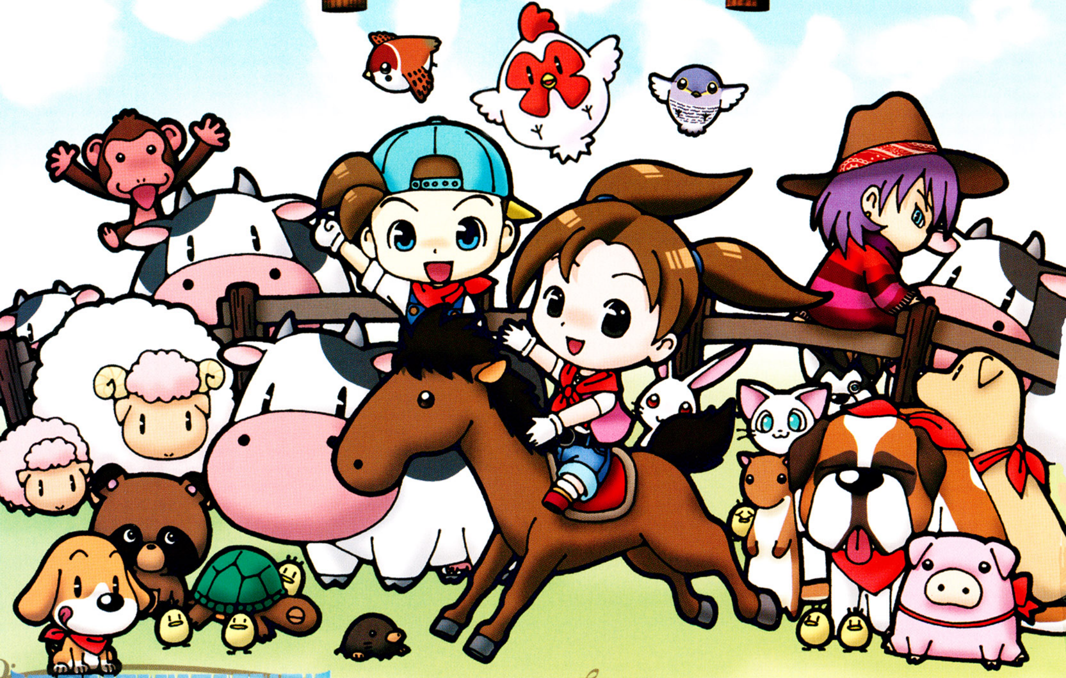

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NINTENDO POWER

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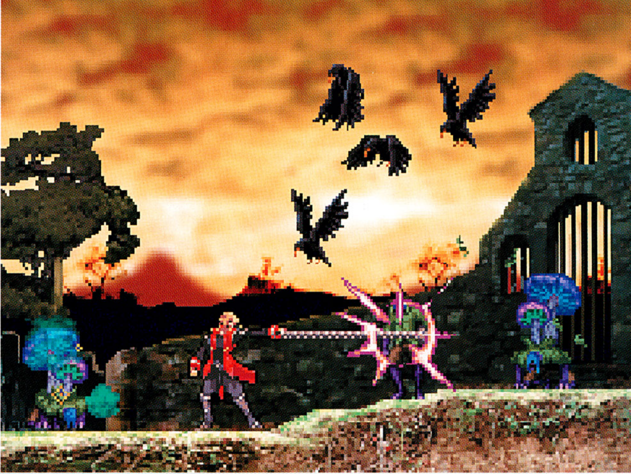

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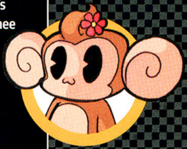
If you insist on using that whip, take it outside!



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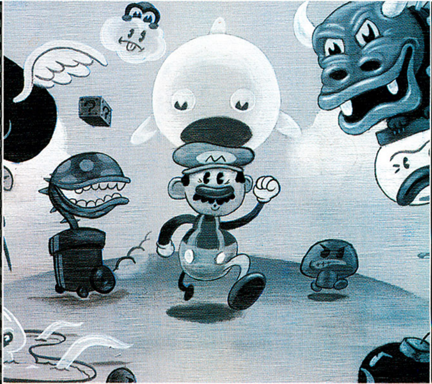

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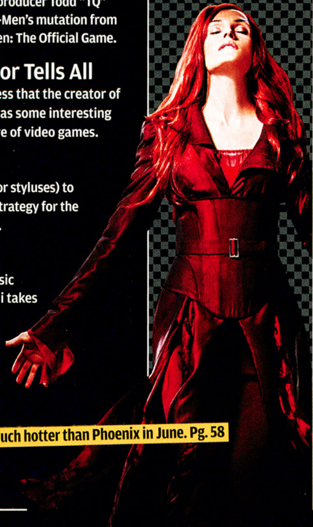
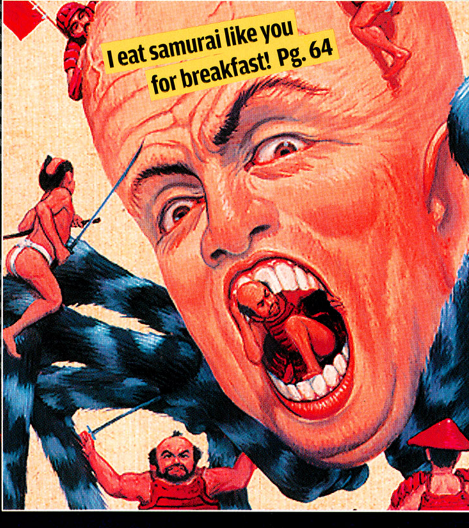
No, this isn't concept art for Old Super Mario Bros.



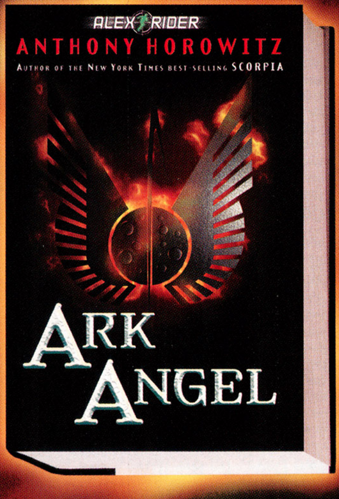
Doesn't get much hotter than Phoenix in June. Pg. 58



I eat samurai like you for breakfast! Pg. 64

ALEX RIDER

KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR


ALEX RIDER
ANTHONY HOROWITZ
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ARK ANGEL

"Fasten your seat belts."—*Kirkus Reviews*

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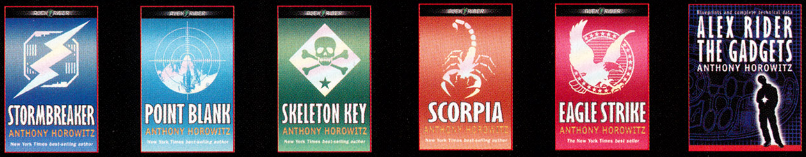
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Gillette
PHILIPS

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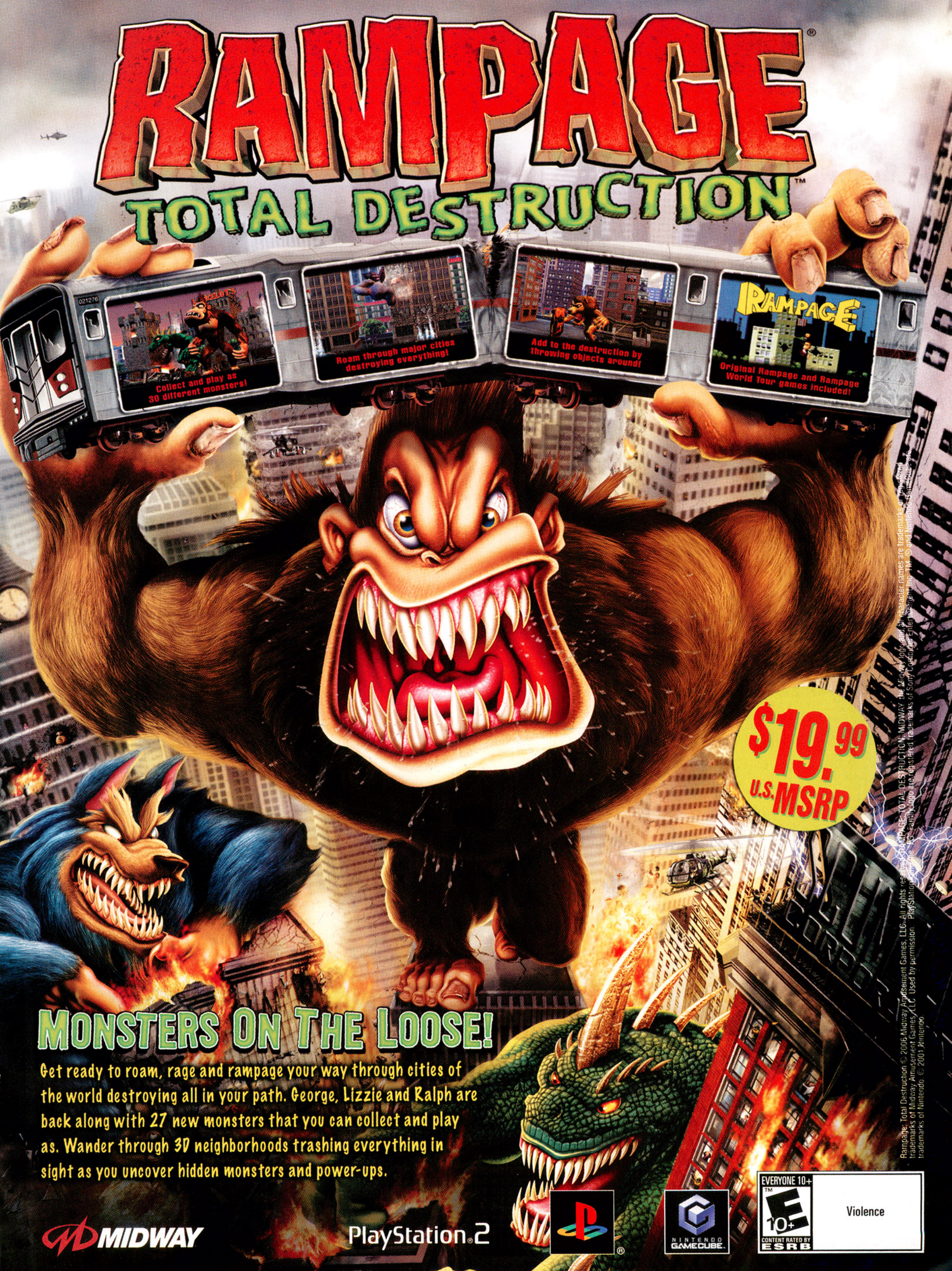
Photo by Rick Newby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Pulse

WE ♥ 8-BIT

I could go on and on about how much Nintendo Power loves Castlevania—how Castlevania was the first NES game I ever played, how NP's Chris Shepperd keeps a leather whip at his desk in case the office is invaded by bats or Medusa heads (that's his story), and how cool it is that Koji "Iga" Igarashi came over from Japan to give us a preview of Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin—but let's face it, Konami's legendary franchise needs no sales pitch. Instead, I'd like to point out a different type of masterpiece we're covering this month; namely, the art inspired by classic Nintendo titles on display at the I Am 8-bit exhibit in Los Angeles. Super game fan and promoter Jon Gibson has sweated bullets to bring the artistic vision of fellow video game fans/artists to the public. We feel privileged to showcase their work in our Framing the Game feature. (You can even test your Mario knowledge by naming all the characters pictured in this month's exclusive poster from I Am 8-bit artist Gabe Swarr; the answers will appear in Vol. 205's Quiz.)

We have plenty more in this issue: Andy Myers' report of Nintendo president Satoru Iwata's keynote speech at the Game Developers Conference, complete with revelations about a new DS Zelda game and Revolution virtual console news; the announcement of Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam for Revolution; a truly fascinating interview with Odama's creator, Yoot Saito; 25 amazing New Super Mario Bros. moments; and a miniguide for LostMagic.

As we look forward to this year's E3, keep in mind that you can stay up-to-date at Nintendo.com beginning on May 9. The NP Crew will be there to cover Nintendo's most important show ever.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

DS PLAYER

What was the cable used to connect the DS to a TV on page 91 in Volume 202? I've been looking all over for something like that!

meatloaf8000
via the Internet

That's the unit we use to capture DS screenshots for the magazine. It's not available to consumers. Sorry.

DO THE MATH

I am so excited for The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess! It looks totally awesome. I have a question, though. Why is Nintendo only releasing the game on the PS3?

Seth P.
via the Internet

Boy, the Twilight Princess rumors are really getting out of control. To set the record straight, the game will be playable on only one next-generation console: the Atari Jaguar.

KILLER AP

Don't you guys think that PBS should make a "Joy of Painting" game starring Bob Ross for the DS? Just think of how many "happy trees" you could paint using the touch screen.

Eric L.
via the Internet

You're not going to believe this, but according to bobross.com, a Joy of Painting game is already being planned for both the DS and the Revolution (as well as the PC). The site states that "the Bob Ross game will utilize the unique inputs that the Nintendo DS and Nintendo Revolution have that can truly immerse the players while they learn to paint like Bob Ross."

BETTER EVIL

I have just recently begun to really enjoy the Resident Evil series (I've been playing RE4 like there's no tomorrow), and I have a question. Which version of the original Resident Evil should I get: the DS game or the GCN game?

Jonathan D.
via the Internet

We love Deadly Silence, but if you've never played the original Resident Evil before, go with the GCN game. It's the definitive version of the survival-horror classic, and it still looks absolutely stunning.

SWEEP THE LEG

I think [Nintendo] should make another Super Smash Bros. because I like beating people up.

Vincent D.
via the Internet

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata has already announced that a new Super Smash Bros. is coming for Revolution. In the meantime, maybe you could join Cobra Kai.

LOST FANTASIES

What happened to Final Fantasy V and VI for the GBA and Final Fantasy III for the DS? A few issues ago, you guys announced them, and since then, I haven't heard another word. Have they been canceled?

confused
via the Internet

Nope, all three games are still in development. We should have a lot more information on FF III in particular next month.

ONE MAN ENTERS

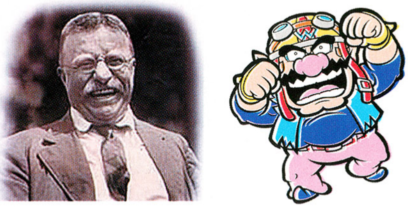
When The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess comes out, how will you decide which member of the NP crew gets to play it first and review it? This is a once

---

ROUGH RIDERS

Have you guys ever noticed the similarity between Wario and Teddy Roosevelt? It's almost like they're the same person! You should check out a side-by-side comparison some time.

Dan P. , Connecticut



The similarities don't end there. Wario is also a registered member of the Bull Moose party.

in a lifetime opportunity.

Jake
via the Internet

It is indeed. We'll settle it as we do all important decisions at NP: with a dance-off.

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

What are some overlooked games that you guys would recommend? I'm always looking for good games that no one's played.

Earl E.
via the Internet

And we're alyways looking for a chance to shine the spotlight on underappreciated gems. Some recent releases that didn't get a lot of hype but deserve your attention are Drill Dozer (GBA), Chibi-Robo (GCN), The Rub Rabbits! (DS), Age of Empires: The Age of Kings (DS), and Let's Ride: Sunshine Stables (GBA). OK, maybe not that last one unless you're a five-year-old girl . . . named Earl.

MISSING KIDS

Quit jerking me around! My favorite Mario characters are the Koopa Kids. In Volume 202, you asked Takashi Tezuka if, among other things, the Koopalings were going to show up in New Super Mario Bros., to which he replied, "yes." The very next issue shows Bowser Jr.—*not* one of the original Koopa Kids—in screen shots, but no word or image of the rest of my favorite Koopa pack. Are they in there or not?

Alex G.
via the Internet

Bowser Jr. is indeed in the game, but the Koopa Kids are not. Mr. Tezuka's claim to the contrary was likely the result of a mistranslation or misunderstanding. We apologize for the confusion. If it's any consolation, the game is still superawesome. Check out some of our favorite moments on page 52.

HOT STUFF

Hey, could you guys show a picture of Samus with no suit on from Metroid Prime Hunters?

Matt
via the Internet

No problemo. Turn the page for a picture of Samus unmasked.

I can't believe that we're gonna be able to download both Genesis games and TurboGrafx games on the Revolution [as announced by Mr. Iwata at GDC]. If you had told me this 15 years ago, I never would have believed you. I can still remember the bitter 16-bit wars. Honestly, though, that was a great time to be a gamer. The competition between all three companies really brought out the best in each one. And now, to think I'll be able to play Super Mario World, Sonic the Hedgehog, and Bonk's Adventure all on one platform. Hopefully this is just the beginning. I'd love to see Sonic and Bonk in the next Super Smash Bros.

Ted K.
via the Internet

We're pretty excited, too, Ted. A lot of us had only one of the 16-bit systems back in the day, so this is a great opportunity for us to play all of the great games that came out on the competing consoles. For younger gamers, it's a chance to experience what many consider the golden age of gaming.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

I am a senior in high school and I love video games, so I figured, why not write for a gaming mag? What do your jobs consist of? Could you show us what a typical day is like at Nintendo Power?

Dakota
via the Internet

Sure thing, Dakota.

8:30 am: Arrive at NP headquarters rarin' to go for another day at the greatest job on Earth.

8:30 - 9:30 am: Check e-mail and scan gaming sites to catch up on the day's news.

9:30 - 10:00 am: Attend morning exercise class.

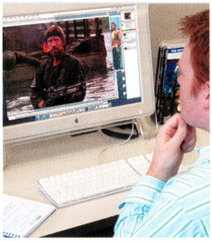
10:00 - 11:00 am: Play games for review.

11:00 - 11:30 am: Contact game publishers and conduct research for upcoming features.

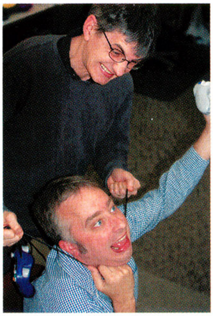
11:30 am - 12:00 pm: Investigate new ways to inflict bodily harm on staff writer Chris Shepperd.

12:00 - 1:00 pm: Argue for 50 minutes about where to go to lunch, then spend 10 minutes scarfing it down.

1:00 - 2:00 pm: Scour the Internet for awesome photographs of beloved '80s icons.



2:00 - 2:45 pm: Play a friendly game of Madden or Super Smash Bros.



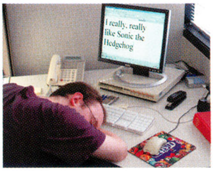
2:45 - 3:15 pm: Have a dance-off to determine who will write the Twilight Princess review.

3:15 - 4:30 pm: Brainstorm ways to fill space in Pulse.

4:30 - 5:00 pm: Search for more photos.

5:00 - 5:45 pm: Use action figures scattered about the office to re-enact famous Civil War battles.

5:45 - 6:00 pm: Write articles.


I really, really like Sonic the Hedgehog

6:00 - 7:00 pm: Meet up with local mayor/vigilante and take to the mean streets of downtown Redmond, pile-driving punks into the concrete and eating turkeys out of garbage cans.

7:00 pm: Go home and get some rest. Tomorrow will be another busy day.

Samus "Rough Rider" Aran

AS THEY WERE MEANT TO BE

Since purchasing Super Mario Bros. 3 for my GBA, I have noticed that there are graphical differences [compared to the NES original], and that Mario was given a voice. For games like this, will the Revolution [downloads] offer the original version or the updated one?

Charity W.
via the Internet

Only time will tell, but since the Revolution will be emulating the NES and not the GBA, we imagine it will offer the original 8-bit versions of games like Super Mario Bros. 3.

GOOD POINT

I was reading Marsmegametroid's random questions in Vol. 203, and he asked why Link can't talk. You forgot to mention that Link did have a speaking role in the CD-i games, but the developer's gave him a really whiny voice. That's probably why Chuck Norris roundhouse-kicked him in the throat.

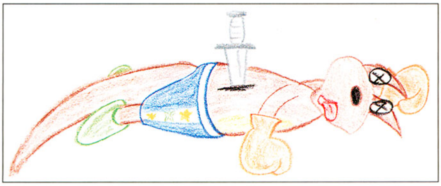
Becky
via the Internet

DEFINE "ART"

I have seen some pretty good pictures in the "Art of the Month" recently. Can anyone on the NP Crew make art as good as that?

Luc C.
via the Internet

Steve T. drew this picture of Kao the Kangaroo after reviewing the marupial's latest title for last month's issue. We're not sure it's as good as the Art of the Month entries, but it does reflect Steve's "passion" for the game.



TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

I wish you guys were a weekly magazine. I can't wait every month for my new issue to come. I know there wouldn't be as much to talk about on a weekly basis, but I just love reading NP.

Peter D.
via the Internet

We appreciate the kind sentiments, Peter, but a monthly dose of obscure '80s references and embarassing Chris Shepperd photographs seems like more than enough. This next reader would probably agree.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

I can't belive how much time your wasting in that useless magazine!!!! you're np crew is the most retarted writers in history! you're comapny and CRAPPIE writters are so poor, you can't even put a fan art page! that's ridiculous!!! your reviews are stupid you're not real gamers at all, who the hell like pokemon??!!?!? you're writers suck!!! your magazine that isn't funny i'm unsubscribing.

Jake H.
via the Internet

Ouch.

THE END IS NIGH

Is Twilight Princess being released before or after we all experience the apocalypse?

Kirbynidl
via the Internet

With the announcement of a Bob Ross video game, some would argue that the apocalypse is already upon us.

HISTORICAL APPRECIATION

I just wanted to say that I really appreciate the new Playback section. I think it's important for newer gamers to learn about the excellent games that they never had a chance to play, and I'm interested to see how Playback is implemented when the Revolution comes around.

Rhyume
via the Internet

ELITE HUNTERS

How do you get the bronze, silver, and gold emblems next to your name [in Metroid Prime Hunters]? There are hundreds of posts about this on the forums, but nobody can figure it out.

Jake
via the Internet

Those emblems indicate your Wi-Fi ranking. They're determined by the number of matches you've played via Wi-Fi and the number of wins you've accrued.

RETURN TO SENDER

About seven months ago, I sent out my most-trusted carrier pigeon with some mail for you guys. Did you ever get it?

Darkarrow52
via the Internet

Yes, and it was delicious. Thank You.

CORRECTOR'S CORNER

When a reader [in Volume 202] asked what to do if someone starts wrecking your town, you guys recommended turning off the power. But you said that you would have to deal with Resetti afterwards, which is not true. If you reset the game or the game lags out when you are playing over Wi-Fi, you will not experience the "thrills" of seeing Mr. Resetti.

Bijan Z.
via the Internet

There is a mistake in Volume 203. In the review for Metroid Prime Hunters, you stated that the platform is the Nintendo GameCube. Of course, the game is actually for the Nintendo DS.

SolSurvivor
via the Internet

In Volume 203, you wrote that Super Mario Sunshine was the first game to feature the wall kick. This is not true. The first Mario game to feature the wall kick was in fact Super Mario 64. While the game only required the move in one or two spots, and was (at least for me) extremely difficult, it did introduce the maneuver.

Alec R.
via the Internet

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MOST WANTED

Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Baten Kaitos II
3. LEGO *Star Wars II:* The Original Trilogy
4. Super Monkey Ball Adventure
5. Odama

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

1. Yggdra Union
2. LEGO *Star Wars II:* The Original Trilogy
3. Metal Slug
4. Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation
5. X-Men: The Official Game

>NINTENDO DS

1. New Super Mario Bros.
2. The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass
3. Children of Mana
4. Final Fantasy III
5. LostMagic

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

The rivalry between Mario and Sonic continues as the mascots' respective racing games battle for the top spot.

1. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
2. Sonic Riders
3. Super Mario Strikers
4. Super Mario Sunshine
5. Super Smash Bros. Melee
6. Mario Party 7
7. LEGO *Star Wars*
8. Resident Evil 4
9. Shadow the Hedgehog
10. Animal Crossing

TOP SELLERS

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

Is it just us, or does a goblet of fire seem terribly impractical? How are you supposed to drink from a goblet if there's fire coming out of it?

1. Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire
2. Chicken Little
3. Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy
4. Curious George
5. Pokémon Emerald
6. Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
7. Dogz
8. The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
9. LEGO *Star Wars*
10. Donkey Kong Country 3

Next up: The Teapot of Lava.

TOP SELLERS

>NINTENDO DS

Nintendogs is starting to show Super Smash Bros.-caliber staying power.

1. Animal Crossing: Wild World
2. Mario Kart DS
3. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time
4. Nintendogs: Dachshund
5. Nintendogs: Labrador
6. Nintendogs: Chihuahua
7. Super Mario 64 DS
8. Resident Evil: Deadly Silence
9. The Sims 2
10. Tamagotchi Connection

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

HAWK ON REVOLUTION!

VACATION FOR JAPAN

Pratty
You're quite a nasty little runt, aren't you!?
NEXT WAVE OF GBA

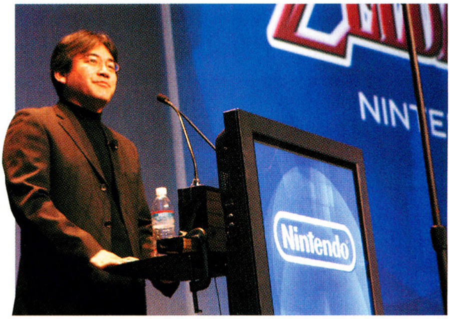
THREE, TWO, ONE . . .

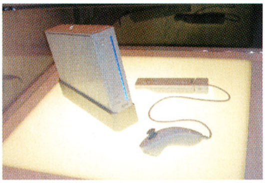
"Ready for Disruption"

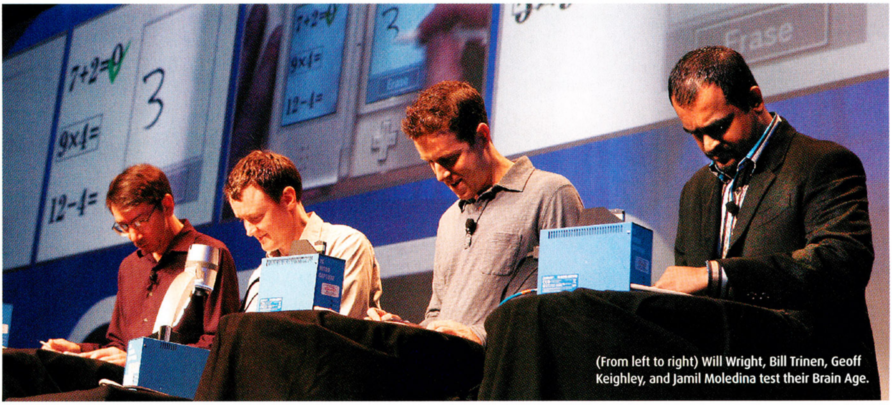
Mr. Iwata stirs game developers and prepares the world for the future of gaming.

The countdown to this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo began almost a year ago. The moment E3 2005 came to a close last May, the world knew that the 2006 expo would be overflowing with next-gen console news—and that the Revolution would finally be fully unveiled. Leading up to the monumental event this May, Nintendo President Satoru Iwata delivered a thought-provoking keynote address at the Game Developers Conference in San Jose, CA, and NP was there to take it all in.

The message of Iwata's speech was clear, calling the game development community to action. "Our business is starting to resemble a bookstore where you can only buy expensive, full sets of encyclopedias," Iwata declared, and went on to explain how an innovative idea like Tetris would probably never see the light of day in today's industry. Iwata's solution? To enact change in the industry by disrupting it. "For some time, we have believed the game industry is ready for disruption," stated Iwata. "Not just from Nintendo, but from all game developers." To emphasize Nintendo's commitment to this concept, localization manager Bill Trinen came onstage to demo two very different DS games that have shaken up the industry in different ways. The first demo, Brain Age, showed audience members a title that has already expanded the boundaries of video games in Japan and charted record sales numbers. The second game, Metroid Prime Hunters, represented one of the many facets of the ever-growing Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, which has made the move of offering free, easy-to-use Wi-Fi gaming to everyone. "I hope that [MPH] shows we're not turning our backs on the kind of games




On the show floor at this year's Game Developers Conference, crowds gathered around an unmarked glass case to behold the Revolution.



(From left to right) Will Wright, Bill Trinen, Geoff Keighley, and Jamil Moledina test their Brain Age.

that current core players already love," Iwata explained.

Iwata stayed on the topic of the DS for a while, leading up to the show's most exciting moment: the revealing of The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass for the handheld. The trailer (which can now be viewed as part of the GDC news story at www.nintendo.com) lasted just over a minute, and divulged much of the game's look and feel, including an array of pioneering touch-screen functionality, to a stunned audience. For now, we can only speculate on the many new ideas Phantom Hourglass will bring to the Zelda universe, but we can't wait to get our hands on the game at this year's E3.

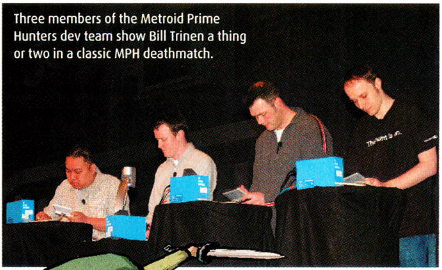
Following the Zelda showing, Iwata moved to the topic that speech-goers were eagerly awaiting: Revolution. He offered some insight into Nintendo's lengthy process for creating the Revolution controller (which began in early 2004), describing the moment when a young team leader of the controller-development group proposed that the controller be one-handed. This led to another idea that came from the Metroid Prime development team at Retro Studios: include a secondary nunchuku-like device. The Revolution round table continued for well over a year, and involved Mr. Miyamoto and others from all over the world. "As you can imagine, this was a very expensive process," explained Iwata. "Some people put their money on the screen, but we decided to spend ours on the game experience."

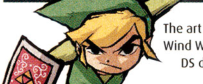
> **"I consider our virtual-console concept the video game version of Apple's iTunes music store."**

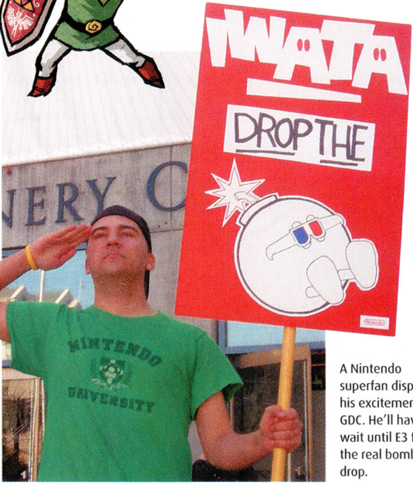
Iwata continued his Revolution discourse with some telling virtual-console details: The Revolution download system will include not only titles developed for past Nintendo platforms, but for the Sega Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 consoles as well. He went on to emphasize the importance of this feature, and promised to make all the best games developed for these old systems available for download on the Revolution. "I consider our virtual-console concept the video game version of Apple's iTunes music store," he declared.

> **"Video games are meant to be just one thing: fun . . . fun for everyone."**

The virtual console is just one piece of the puzzle. As details start to trickle in about Nintendo's next-gen disruptor, many specifics remain hidden, and many questions linger in the minds of gamers. E3 is almost upon us, and it's sure to be brimming with Revolution news. "In a few weeks, you will better understand how to disrupt console gaming," promised Iwata. "You will play, and you will see." Iwata's closing remark clearly resonated well with the game developers in attendance. He proclaimed, "Video games are meant to be just one thing: fun . . . fun for everyone." —ANDY M.


Three members of the Metroid Prime Hunters dev team show Bill Trinen a thing or two in a classic MPH deathmatch.


The art style made famous by The Wind Waker is ever-present in Link's DS debut, revealed at GDC.



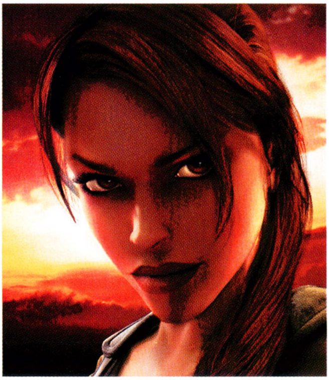
A Nintendo superfan displays his excitement at GDC. He'll have to wait until E3 for the real bomb to drop.

COMEBACK CAREER?

Jonesing for Lara

Lara Croft is hell-bent on returning to her former glory in Tomb Raider: Legend. And she's embracing GCN, DS, and GBA to get the job done.

Like all sudden celebrities, Lara Croft has had a rough life. After shooting to fame with Tomb Raider in '96, Lara's sequels dragged her ever closer to early retirement. But Eidos has taken bold steps to ensure that Tomb Raider: Legend will restore her to true form. It's switched development duties from Core Design, the longtime Tomb Raider studio, to Crystal Dynamics, which has a solid track record of character-driven games with its Kain series. And it also has Lara Croft's creator, Toby Gard, hard at work taking the heroine back to her roots. Eidos has kept much of Legend's story under wraps, but we do know that Lara will head to South America as she searches for one of the world's most famous artifacts, and that Legend will reveal key details about its star's origins when the GCN, DS and GBA games hit stores this summer. —STEVEN G.


Legend will give Lara a more realistic look for a game that plans to get back to basics with her character.

TWIST AND TRICK

Racing Revolution

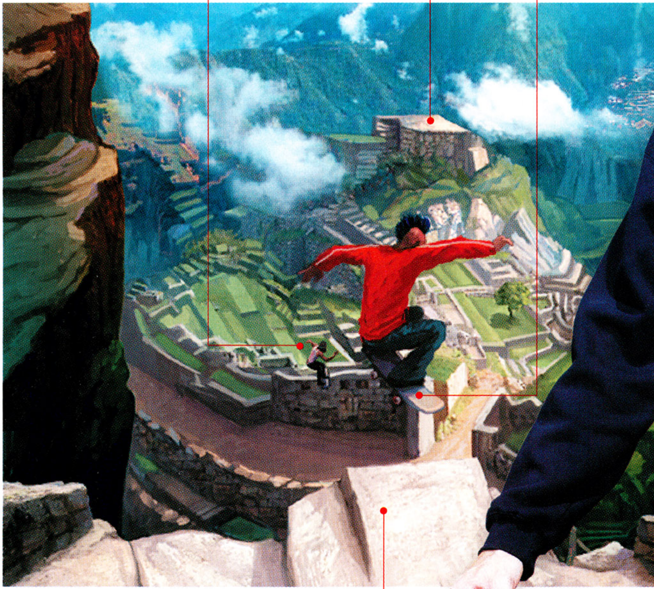
Activision's first title for the coming Revolution takes Tony Hawk to new heights and depths. Concept art for Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam gives up a glimpse of what to expect when the game launches later this year.

Like SSX on dry land, Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam mixes speed with gravity-defying tricks for a surefire hit on Nintendo's next console. Publisher Activision has tapped franchise newcomer Toys for Bob to develop a game that aims to attract new players to the series while it keeps the Tony Hawk faithful onboard. By using the Revolution controller's motion sensitivity, racers will be able to turn and boost without touching a button. The game will also feature button combinations to pull off tricks that recall the controls for the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and Tony Hawk's Underground titles. The concept art below shows the basis for one of the game's eight racing environments, and the callouts explain how the game steers the Tony Hawk series in a new direction. Look for a full feature, complete with screenshots and more details on the game's use of the Revolution's capabilities next month. For information on the DS version, developed by Vicarious Visions, see our preview feature on page 44.
—George S.

Real Competition
The developers have implemented a split-screen multiplayer feature to allow for as many as four competitors at once.

Machu Picchu and Beyond
Most of the game's eight huge environments are real-world locations known for their steep terrain, including the ruins of Machu Picchu in the Andes, and the hills of San Francisco.

Eight Challengers
Tony's gone up against pro skaters in previous titles. In Downhill Jam, he'll take on eight new racers, each with a unique style and skill set.



QuikSilver
QUIKSILVER

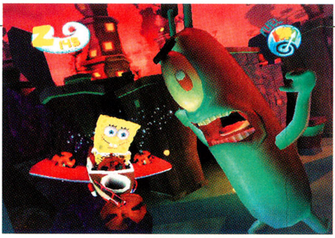
Ramp and Race
Big air is still huge in the Hawk's world, but so is reaching the finish line. Racers will use tricks to build up a boost meter, then activate the boost by thrusting the controller forward.

VISUALIZE BIKINI BOTTOM

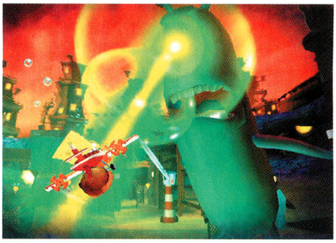
Sweet Dreams

SpongeBob's world gets even wackier in Creature from the Krusty Krab, slated for both GCN and Revolution.

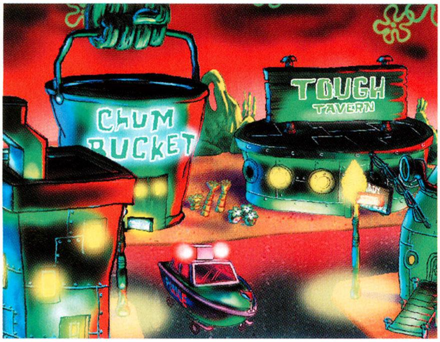
If you lived in a pineapple under the sea, you'd have weird dreams, too. SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab is an adventure game that takes place in the nightmarish worlds dreamt up by Bikini Bottom residents Spongebob, Patrick, and Plankton as they sleep. The story is roughly based on the season-one episode called "Sleepy Time," and will take players through nine wildly contrasting levels as dream versions of the three stars. The gameplay on each level ranges from action-platforming to vehicle-flying to anything inbetween. On one level, you'll play as giant Plankton and go on a destructive romp through Bikini Bottom; another level will have your character free-falling through a massive hole. Details are scarce on both versions of the game, but game developer Blitz told us that the Revolution version will have "a lot more in there." Expect both games near the end of the year. —Andy M.



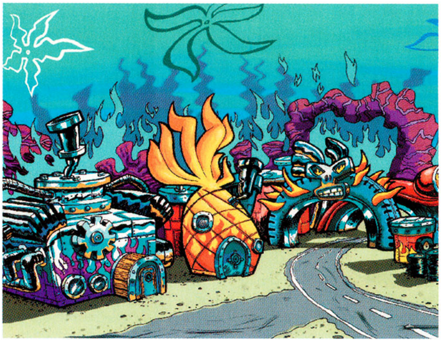
Flying a boat in Spongebob's mind is only one of the game's many offbeat activities.



Though the two screenshots shown here represent the game's GCN version, it's easy to imagine what gameplay with the Revolution controller might entail.



Each of the nine environments in Creature from the Krusty Krab has a different theme. The above concept art shows off the '50s B-movie level.



Another piece of concept art puts the player in a hotrod-themed environment in which Spongebob must race a dragster.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

Though May doesn't have a ton of games in store, it'll still be a megaton month: the New Super Mario Bros. game shakes up the present while E3 shakes up the future.

5-9

The speculation stops today.

Nintendo holds its E3 media briefing on this morning. That means that the surely stunning news about Revolution—and all the DS games on the way—will at long last be known. Get your breaking news at nintendo.com.

5-10 to 5-12

Revolution impressions! DS details! All the E3 you can eat!

How can so many games be kept secret for so long? They'll finally burst free at the Electronic Entertainment Expo—stay glued to nintendo.com for emerging details!

5-15

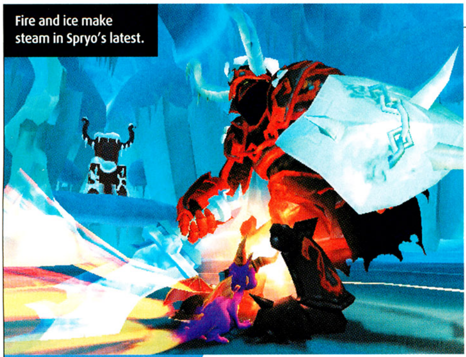
New Bros. action? Woo-hoo!

You won't have to wait long for Nintendo to bring one of its heavy-hitting E3 games to stores. Just three days after the big event, Mario and Luigi's powered-up bro-mojo works its charm on the DS in New Super Mario Bros.

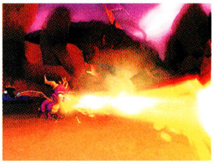
5-26

Muuuu-tants! Come out and play-ee-ay!

The third X-Men flick, *X-Men: The Last Stand*, invades theaters today. Expect the mutant war to hit the GCN, DS, and GBA in mid-to-late May.



Fire and ice make steam in Spryo's latest.



A WHOLE LOT OF HOT AIR

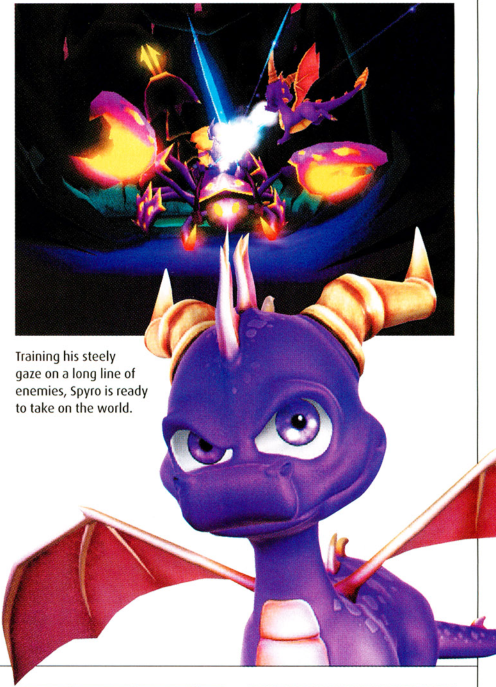
Spyro Reborn

Don't let the cute, purple package fool you. Spryo is a fire-breathing powerhouse in a new telling of his origin story.

With fury attacks, upgradable breath, and ground-to-aerial melee combos, Vivendi Universal's Spyro the Dragon will be tearing through beasts like never before in October release The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning for the GCN, DS, and GBA. Though he was raised by fireflies, the hero proves that he's all dragon while blazing his way through seven natural environments and three epic air battles. With every scuffle, the hero gains strength and abilities that include elemental (Earth, Fire, Ice, and Electricity) blasts that he uses to diffuse boss monsters: the Cinder Commander, Ice King, Energy Snake, and more brilliant baddies.

The game's three variations follow a similar story, with a few differences. Though puzzle-solving plays a part in all versions, in the DS game players use a touch interface to manipulate objects, such as prisms and mirrors, to solve puzzles. Flying also plays a bigger part in the DS game, with Spyro taking to the air for level-ending fights.

If the Spyro series seems long in the tooth, A New Beginning may be just what it needs to reignite fans' interest.
—George S.



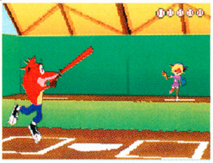
Training his steely gaze on a long line of enemies, Spyro is ready to take on the world.

BIG BANG

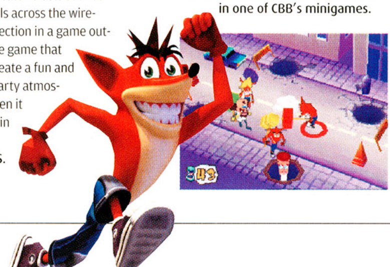
Crash Makes Noise

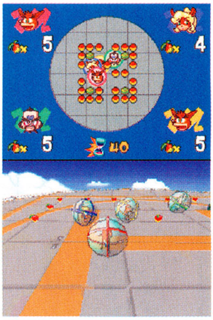
Vivendi Universal's bandicoot crashes the party-game genre with a 40-minigame multiplayer barn burner on the Nintendo DS.

Crash Boom Bang! puts Crash Bandicoot, Coco, Crunch, Neo Cortex, and four more characters into friendly competition in a minigame partython that makes generous use of the DS's touch screen and microphone. While participants run, roll, and battle through a grab bag of minigame activities, they use the title's DS Motion Panel Communicator simultaneously to distract their competitors. The Communicator blasts sounds and visuals across the wireless connection in a game outside of the game that should create a fun and chaotic party atmosphere when it launches in October.
—George S.



The mascot becomes a sports hero in one of CBB's minigames.



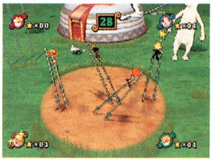


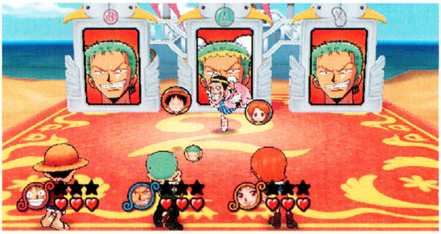
Unlike monkeys, bandicoots can get testy when confined in plastic balls.

GREAT FOR MATEYS

True Party Booty?

Few franchises can step up to killer party-game madness. But One Piece brings a lot of insanity to the table. Calling all pirates!





Outside of Mario Party titles, how many party games truly rock the house? It's rare, but Namco Bandai Games may have tapped the right franchise for its upcoming GCN game, One Piece: Pirates' Carnival, due in May. With the Cartoon Network series' penchant for pirates—all of whom seem to compete for "most bizarre" bragging rights—the game's developers will have lots of lunatic stuff to draw from.

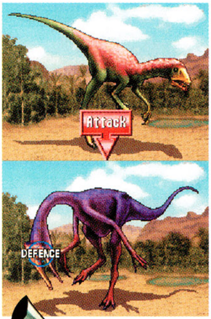
The party title's more than 30 minigames include battles on stilts, deep-sea-diving fragfests, dodgeball matches played with bombs, and giant-feet-avoiding survival challenges. Um, what's that last one again?

One to four players can choose one of eight pirates, then meet dozens more in maps and minigames. Some pirates can even be recruited to players' crews. Pirates' Carnival offers a Board Game mode, plus two more, Mini Game Collection mode and Versus mode, which let players jump right into minigames. —Steven G.

COVERING JURASSIC

Fossil Fuel 'n' Duel

Jurassic Park finally opens for business in Dino Master, which exploits two warring sciences—paleontology and kickbuttology—at long last.



Imagine the results if the main attraction in *Jurassic Park* had opened without a hitch. It might be a lot like Majesco's Dino Master for the DS, in which you'll plunder dig sites for fossils, use 'em to resurrect dinos, then turn the suckers loose on each other in a fight to the finish.

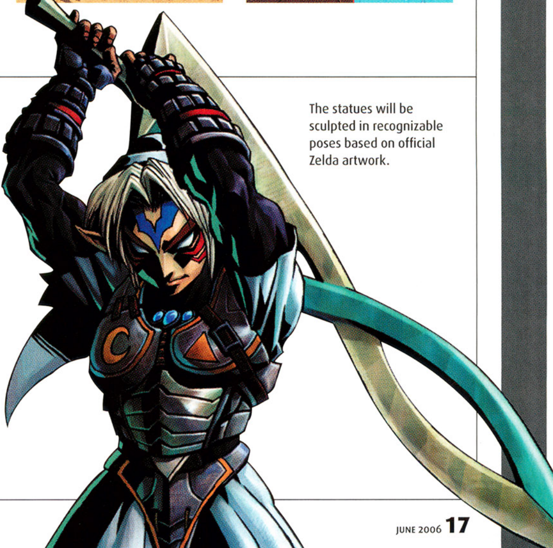
To claim the fossils, you'll roam 35 levels across the world, where you'll run from giant insects and other beasts while trying to stake your claim to profitable stretches of the dig site. Back at your lab, you'll use each fossil to bring one of 100-plus dinosaur species back to life. Then in Battle mode, which you can also play via two-player DS-to-DS wireless sessions, you'll sic your supersaurs on others with over 30 fighting techniques. Ready to make dinos extinct all over again? Don't chomp at the bit; Majesco has yet to announce a Dino Master release date. —Steven G.

SCULPTED SOFTWARE

The Resin of Zelda

If you're looking to add a little sophistication to your gaming lifestyle, First 4 Figures' upcoming Legend of Zelda statues may be the perfect fit.

Who says video games aren't art? Not UK-based First 4 Figures, which recently announced plans to create a line of cold-cast resin ministatues based on The Legend of Zelda under a three-year licensing agreement with Nintendo. The 9-to-12-inch statues will be derived primarily from more-recent Zelda console games, with Fierce Deity Link from Majora's Mask slated to be the first release, coming in fall 2006. Subsequent releases will include Link and Princess Zelda from Twilight Princess; the Skull Kid from Majora's Mask; and Sheik, Dark Link, a Link vs. Ganon diorama, and a scene of young Link pulling out the Master Sword, all from Ocarina of Time. The collectibles are expected to sell for between $80 (for a single statue) and $200 (for a diorama), and will be available through specialty retailers and online. For more information, visit www.first4figures.com. —Chris H.

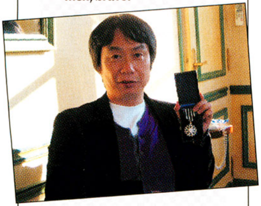


The statues will be sculpted in recognizable poses based on official Zelda artwork.

Miyamoto in the 'Hood

France makes a knight of it with three video-game luminaries.

In early March, Shigeru Miyamoto was honored by the French Ministry of Culture with a knighthood in the Order of Arts and Letters, along with Rayman creator Michel Ancel and Alone in the Dark's Frederick Raynal. Bravo, gentlemen, bravo!



Peace Bomb Hits GDC

A DS concept makes love, not war, and wins a coveted prize.

This year's GDC Game Design Challenge asked competitors to conceive a game that could nab the Nobel Peace Prize. Deus Ex lead designer Harvey Smith won with Peace Bomb, a concept that would use the DS's wireless features to organize flash mobs—that is, crowds that meet quickly for a public purpose, then swiftly disband. Smith posed that PB would use fun gameplay to spark random acts of kindness. Far-fetched, you say? Give peace a chance!

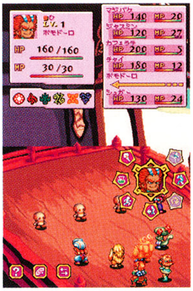
NEWS FROM JAPAN!

Dual Development

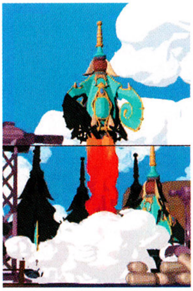
Many games in Nintendo's plans for DS domination remain veiled in secrecy. But two hugely promising games, both made by high-profile studios, are coming into view.

Magical Vacation

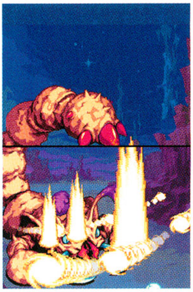
What's Brownie Brown been up to? Japanese gamers will soon find out when the splendiferous studio that made Sword of Mana follows up its other GBA game, Magical Vacation, with a DS sequel. The first MV, which, sadly, Nintendo never brought to North America, was highly praised for its graphics and whimsical story, which followed the students of a magic school through an RPG epic. The sequel will send the spellcasting students on a new quest that will be 100% touch-based on the DS. Now who do we need to enchant to see it come our way? —Steven G.



The DS further proves itself an RPG dream machine with upper-screen stats and maps, and touch-driven menus below.



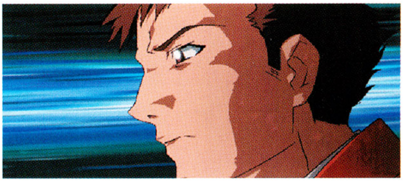
One of the magic school's teachers goes missing in the new quest, and the students must fly to distant planets to find her.

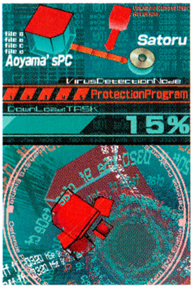


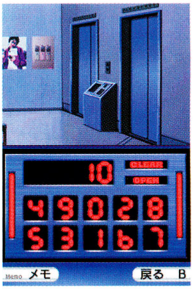
Spell-based battles and special effects will span both screens, making Magical Vacation a sight to behold on the DS.

Project Hacker

Though Gungrave fans have heard of Red Entertainment, most North American gamers aren't familiar the studio's major claim to fame: Japan's popular Sakura Wars, a tactics-based series set in a steam-powered, sci-fi version of 1920s Tokyo. Red Entertainment is now hard at work on a new game for Nintendo called Project Hacker. In the DS adventure, the hero is a gifted hacker who investigates cybercrimes, and the player will use the touch screen to explore crime scenes, solve environmental puzzles, and delve into digital realms. The game will also bring its cyberthriller to life with stylish cut-scenes—another one of the studio's claims to fame. Though further details remain under lock and key, Project Hacker already looks like one of the most intriguing DS games set to infiltrate Japan.





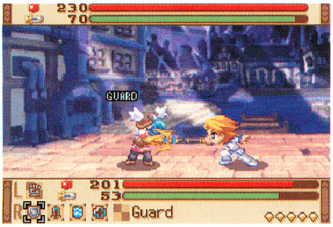


Sensational Six

With the announcement of six new games from three separate franchises, Atlus may satisfy all your GBA sci-fi/fantasy needs in 2006.

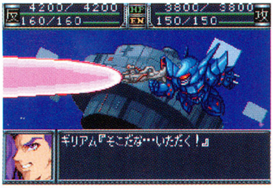
While some third parties are putting most of their handheld might behind Nintendo DS, Atlus still has big plans for the Game Boy Advance. The company recently revealed six new GBA games under development—Summon Night: Swordcraft Story, Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation, and Battle B-Daman, along with a sequel for each. The first game in each series will arrive this summer, with the follow-ups coming in the fall. And all this is in addition to the previously announced strategy-RPG Yggdra Union. —Chris H.

Summon Night: Swordcraft Story

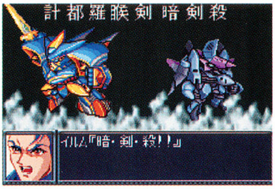


In Summon Night: Swordcraft Story, you're cast as an apprentice Craftknight—one who can use the power of Guardian Beasts to create weapons—attempting to follow in your father's footsteps. The gameplay fuses traditional top-down adventuring with real-time side-view battles (a la Namco's Tales games), and features hundreds of weapons to forge.

Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation



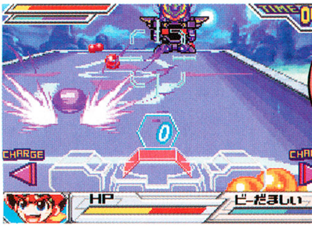
ギリアム『そこだな…いただく！』



イルム『暗・剣・殺！！』

The Super Robot Taisen series first appeared on Game Boy in 1991, and has been on almost every Japanese system since. Finally North American gamers will be able to experience the strategy-RPG series' deep combat system and wealth of customizable mechs.

Battle B-Daman



Based on the cartoon and Hasbro toy line of the same name, Battle B-Daman lets players face off against numerous enemies in a sphere-based combat sport. Mastering the spheres' special powers is the key to victory.

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

Forecast turns into Morecast this month with a pre-E3 influx of handheld titles, including Contact, which Atlus has coming so soon that we've blown out the announcement in a feature on page 34.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title Publisher ●●●
Game Title Publisher ●●● —New games added to the list

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
2006 FIFA World Cup	EA	●●●
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●○
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Backyard Football 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Baten Kaitos II	Nintendo	●●○
Cars	THQ	●●○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	VU Games	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Major League Baseball 2K6	2K Sports	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
The Movies	TBD	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	Tomy/D3PA	●●○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●○
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
Rampage: Total Destruction	Midway	●●●
SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab	THQ	●○○
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	Sega	●●○
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●●
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Double Agent	Ubisoft	●●○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●○○
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●○

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
2006 FIFA World Cup	EA	●●●
The Ant Bully	Midway	●●○
Backyard Baseball 2007	Atari	●●●
Backyard Basketball 2007	Atari	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Battle B-Daman	Atlus	●●○
Battle B-Daman 2	Atlus	●○○
Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue	D3PA	●●●
Cars	THQ	●●○
Catz	Ubisoft	●●●
Flushed Away	D3PA	●○○
Garfield and His Nine Lives	American Game Factory	●●●
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	American Game Factory	●●○
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	VU Games	●○○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mega Man Battle Network 6: Cybeast Falzar & Cybeast Gregar Versions	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
My Little Pony*	THQ	●○○
Naruto 2*	Tomy/D3PA	●○○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Stormbreaker	THQ	●○○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story	Atlus	●●○
Summon Night: Swordcraft Story 2	Atlus	●○○
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation	Atlus	●●○
Super Robot Taisen: Original Generation 2	Atlus	●○○
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●○○
Tonka*	THQ	●○○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●○○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
The Wild	Disney	●●●
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○
Yggdra Union	Atlus	●●○
Yu-Gi-Oh! Ultimate Masters—World Championship Tournament 2006	Konami	●●●

NINTENDO DS

Game Title	Publisher	●●●
2006 FIFA World Cup	EA	●●●
A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Big Brain Academy	Nintendo	●●○
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day	Nintendo	●●○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Cars	THQ	●●○
Children of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
Contact	Atlus	●●○
Crash Boom Bang!	VU Games	●●○
Dino Master	Majesco	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Flushed Away	D3PA	●○○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●●
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●○○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Spyro: A New Beginning	VU Games	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
The Legend of Zelda Phantom Hourglass	Nintendo	●●○
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy	LucasArts	●●○
LostMagic	Ubisoft	●●●
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Magnetica	Nintendo	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Marvel Trading Card Game*	Konami	●○○
MechAssault: Phantom War	Majesco	●●○
Micro Machines v4	Codemasters	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●●
Miss Spider: Harvest Time Hop and Fly	American Game Factory	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster House	THQ	●●○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
New Super Mario Bros.	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Over the Hedge	THQ	●●○
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●●○
Point Blank	Namco	●●○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	Bethesda	●●○
Steel Horizon	Konami	●○○
Stormbreaker	THQ	●●○
Super Black Bass Fishing	Majesco	●●●
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	●○○
Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam	Activision	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
X-Men: The Official Game	Activision	●●○

*Tentative title

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POINT
COUNTER
POINT

STEVE T.

ANDY M.

>Which system ruled the 16-bit era: Super NES or Sega Genesis??

In light of the announcement that Genesis games will be available for download on the Revolution, Steve and Andy revive an age-old debate.

STEVE T: I'm going to begin and end this debate with five words: Genesis does what Nintendon't. Beeotch.

ANDY M: Oh, please. How do you expect me to even dignify that nonsense with a response? I'll give it a shot anyways: SNES is what Genesisn't!

STEVE T: All witty repartee aside, I really do think the Genesis offered the better library. You had arcade classics like Golden Axe and Strider, far-superior versions of EA's sports games (not to mention Sega's own great sports titles), and just more overall variety—from shooters to RPGs—than the Super NES. Sure, if I wanted to play with bunnies in superhappy land, the SNES had me covered, but I was looking for something a bit more.

ANDY M: It's baffling, and a little sad really, that you believe that to be the truth. The SNES clearly had better games in all categories, but thanks for digging your own grave and pointing out RPGs so soon in the debate. Ever heard of a little game called Final Fantasy II? How about III? How about Super Mario RPG, Chrono Trigger, or EarthBound? Any of those ring a bell?

STEVE T: I said more *overall variety*. And the Genesis is sorely underrated when it comes to RPGs. You've got great traditional RPGs like the Phantasy Star series, strategy RPGs like Shining Force, and action RPGs like Beyond Oasis. It may not match the SNES in terms of pure numbers, but there's a lot of breadth there. And what about shooters and action games? Huh? You didn't want to bring that up because you know the slowdown-riddled SNES can't compete with the likes of Gunstar Heroes and Thunder Force.

ANDY M: Oh, that's right! I forgot that you are the last person on Earth who still believes that the magical entity known as Blast Processing lived within your precious console. In that case, I can't really argue, because you are certifiably insane. Seek help, then come back so we can discuss Super Metroid and F-Zero.

"While you were busy putzing around with Color a Dinosaur . . . I was welcoming the next level with The Revenge of Shinobi and Sonic the Hedgehog."

—Steve T.

"The SNES simply had better games. I'd way rather have A Link to the Past than the five best Genesis titles."

—Andy M.

STEVE T: Hey, Blast Processing was just a, uh, "creative" way of saying that the Genesis had a faster processor. Which was true. And insane is waiting two years for a 16-bit console. While you were putzing around with Color a Dinosaur or whatever came out for the NES in those days, I was welcoming the next level with The Revenge of Shinobi and Sonic the Hedgehog.

CHRIS H: Hey, guys, what about the TurboGrafx-16? Bonk's Adventure was pretty cool.

ANDY M: . . .

STEVE T: . . .

ANDY M: Anyway. I wouldn't go there, Steve. Genesis may have been the first console on the block, but a few short years later, we SNES owners were busy playing groundbreaking new titles like Tetris Attack, Harvest Moon, and Yoshi's Island, while Sega was dinking around with the 32X and the overpriced Sega CD.

STEVE T: Oh, that's right. I forgot that you hate technology. The full-motion video stuff was crap, but the Sega CD also gave us Lunar, Sonic CD, and Snatcher. And it's not like Sega stopped making great Genesis games when the Sega CD came out. They were simply giving players the option to upgrade their system. And I, for one, appreciated that option.

ANDY M: We're getting off track. When it comes down to it, the real questions mainstream consumers were asking themselves were "Do I want Super Mario World or Sonic the Hedgehog" and "Do I want Zelda or . . . uh, not Zelda." Seriously, though, both consoles offered a ton of decent games, and we could argue which one had more until the sun comes up. But the SNES simply had *better* games. I'd way rather have A Link to the Past than the five best Genesis titles.

STEVE T: And that's because, in addition to technology, you also hate freedom. But I suppose since this is Nintendo Power, and not Sega Visions, you're going to get the last word, huh?

ANDY M: I like freedom—when it's fun. The good news, though, is that we can put our differences behind us, as Revolution will offer the best of both worlds. That, my friend, is the last word.

VS.
SUPER NINTENDO
SUPER NINTENDO
GENESIS
SEGA
GENESIS

LET THE ULTIMATE BATTLE BEGIN!
Naruto
The Nine-Tailed Fox Chakra
Sasuke
Multiple Shurikens
MULTIPLE SHURIKENS!
Combo hits
Kakashi
Zabuza
GAME BOY ADVANCE
SHONEN JUMP'S NARUTO NINJA COUNCIL
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The Hollywood invasion continues with classic space operas and CG-based newcomers.

Cars Pg. 24
LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy Pg. 26
Magnetica Pg. 25
Metal Slug Pg. 25
Monster House Pg. 27
Star Trek: Tactical Assault Pg. 27

Wheel World

>CARS

PLATFORM: GCN, DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: RAINBOW STUDIOS (GCN), HELIXE (DS, GBA)
RELEASE: JUNE 2006

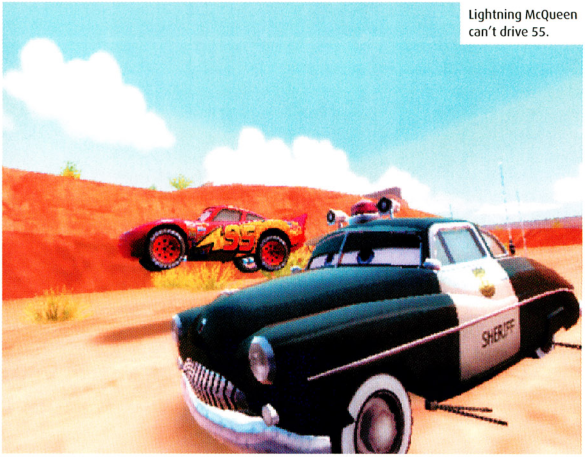
Not quite a Grand Theft Auto clone, but still a freewheeling adventure, the GCN adaptation of Pixar's big summer film *Cars* puts you behind the steering wheel of Lightning McQueen (a tip of the cap to racing actor Steve McQueen) in a 30-event mission to reach the racing big time. Riding through dusty burg Rusty Springs, you search for competition, driving lessons, and auto-related activities. By completing events (some of which are based on scenes from the film), you unlock more things to do. In addition to races, activities include a tractor-tipping exercise, a pit-stop minigame, and a run through an obstacle course. By collecting bonus points that are scattered throughout the wide-open environment, you can purchase items, such as movie stills, concept art, and additional cars for Arcade-mode races or split-screen-multiplayer contests.

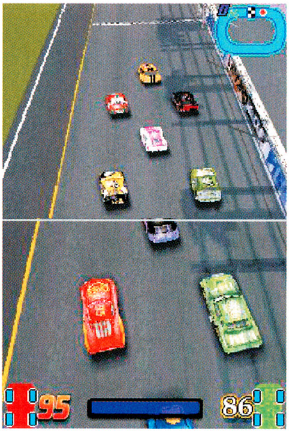
Instead of movie footage, the game features game-story-specific cut-scenes with voices provided by the film's stars, including Owen Wilson as Lightning, Paul Newman as Doc Hudson, and Bonnie Hunt as Sally.

The DS game is a collection of touch-controlled minigames, accompanied by a two-screen-tall racer for one or two players. Periodic pit stops are touch-controlled as well. The quicker you are with the stylus, the faster you'll emerge from the pit. Among the minigames are a traffic-light memory exercise, a tire-stacking activity in which you use the stylus to toss tires onto a pile, and a road race that challenges you to guide a car by tapping lanes, making it zigzag around obstacles.

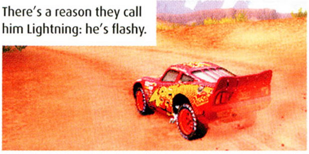
The GBA version is an isometric-view racing game that has you selecting from several circuit races and competing for a bid to represent Radiator Springs in the Piston Cup. Your on-track heroics unlock stills from the film.

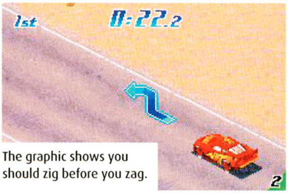
When *Cars* zooms into multiplexes this June, it's sure to be the box-office-topping talk of the film world. Considering THQ's success with the Finding Nemo and Incredibles titles, the Cars games stand a chance of lapping their competition. —GEORGE S.


Lightning McQueen can't drive 55.



6,235
10,000
50
25
46.3
In the future, we'll all have flying cars.


There's a reason they call him Lightning: he's flashy.



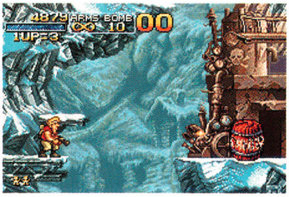
The graphic shows you should zig before you zag.

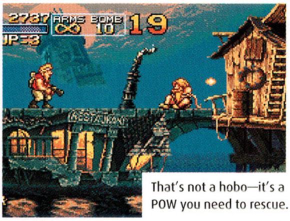
Heavy Metal Assault

>METAL SLUG

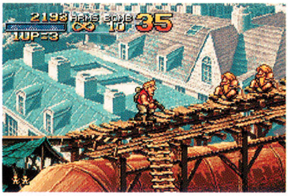
PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: SNK PLAYMORE
DEVELOPER: TELEGAMES • RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2006

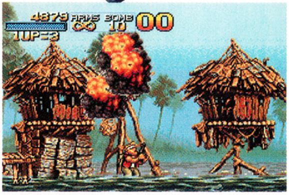
Anyone familiar with the original NeoGeo version of Metal Slug already knows why the game's arrival on GBA has been so hotly anticipated since it was announced nearly a year ago. After all, Metal Slug is recognized as one of the most intense side-scrolling shooting series around, and features some of the most exciting 2-D run-and-gun action this side of Contra. Unlike 2004's Metal Slug Advance, the new Metal Slug game aims to faithfully re-create the coin-op game in portable form, complete with weapon power-ups—such as flamethrowers, shotguns, and heavy machine guns—and the famous Metal Slug "Super Vehicle 001" battle tank. The battle to take down the evil General Morden will rage across six levels, including forests, cities, and icy wastelands. Although Metal Slug's development still has a long way to go, the character sprites and backgrounds (featuring light reflecting off the water, among other graphical nuances) already look as good as the NeoGeo originals; hopefully the smooth controls and detailed animations will be ported successfully as well. Unfortunately, the game supports only one player at present, but I guess you can't have everything. —CHRIS H.





That's not a hobo—it's a POW you need to rescue.





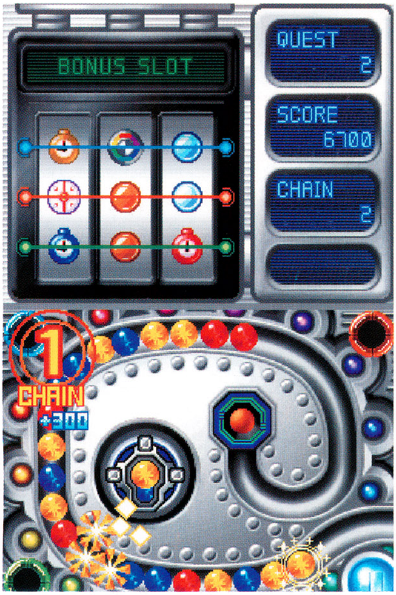
Marble Madness

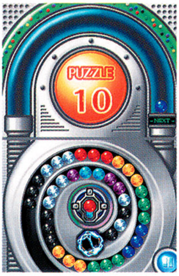
>MAGNETICA

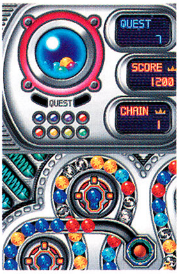
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: MITCHELL • RELEASE: JUNE 2006

The DS is on a puzzle-game roll. With Tetris DS's interlocking pieces currently haunting gamers' dreams, another addictive piece-matching puzzler is on the horizon. Making perfect use of the handheld's touch screen, Magnetica has you flinging marbles from the center of a swirling spiral in an attempt to keep the flowing mass of marbles from going down a drain. If your launch results in matching at least three colored marbles, the grouping will disappear, leaving an opportunity for other marbles to connect and match, often triggering score-skyrocketing combos. Success requires both quick thinking and good aim. If your aim is off, you'll likely do more harm than good, and cause the marble mess to grow as it marches closer to the end of the line.

Four modes—Challenge, Quest, Puzzle, and Versus—offer different ways to play, a variety of marble tracks, and a collection of items (such as a clock that freezes the marble flow temporarily). Whereas the recent Tetris release oozes retro-gaming flavor, Magnetica is sleek and polished, and moves to a techno beat. The groove will head your way this summer. —GEORGE S.







Those paths are more congested than Dick Cheney's arteries.

Ship Off the Old Block

>LEGO *STAR WARS* II: THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

PLATFORM: DS, GBA • PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS
DEVELOPER: AMAZE • RELEASE: FALL 2006

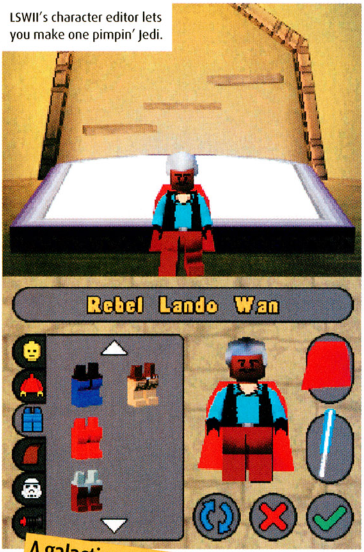
If you read last month's coverage of the console version of LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, you already know that the game gives *Star Wars* Episodes IV, V, and VI a comedic LEGO makeover on GCN. But that was only the tip of the Star Destroyer: LucasArts is also bringing the "blockbuster" franchise to DS and GBA.

Surprisingly little has been sacrificed for the game's port to DS. Like its console counterpart, the DS version features 3-D slash-and-blast gameplay in familiar locales throughout that galaxy far, far away, including Mos Eisley on Tatooine, Echo Base on Hoth, the forest moon of Endor, and both the interior and exterior of the Death Star. Also like the console version, the game features multiple playable characters onscreen at once, giving the player the ability to switch between them at will, and a friend can join in (or drop out of) the action at any time to trounce the Empire in co-op mode. More than 50 playable characters—including Luke, Leia, Han, Chewbacca, Lando, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and Darth Vader—and 10 controllable vehicles (such as the X-wing, TIE fighter, AT-ST, *Slave I*, and *Millennium Falcon*) are included to re-create key moments from the movie trilogy.

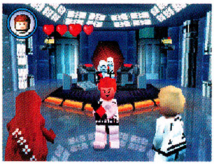
But the DS version also has features that the GCN game doesn't. The touch screen can be used in Free Play mode to switch between any of the playable characters instantly, and it also provides a convenient way to use the game's mix-and-match character-customization feature. Another exclusive addition is a local wireless four-player battle arena (with single-card download play), in which players compete in a capture-the-flag-style game where they try to snag the carbon-frozen Han Solo in Jabba's palace. By collecting LEGO minikit pieces in the regular game levels, players can unlock new bounty hunters (like Zuckuss, Bossk, and IG-88, each with different abilities) for arena competition. The second screen of the DS also comes into play in arena battles, where it functions as a radar.

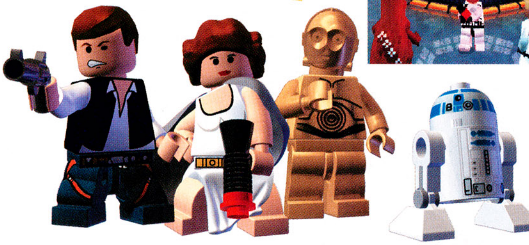
Though the GBA version of LSWII doesn't have quite as many features (it's single-player only and lacks the character-customization option), it should prove to be just as exciting. The same stages as the console and DS version's have been adapted for the GBA's isometric perspective, and the developers promise more of everything compared to the original GBA game: better graphics, more LEGO interaction, more unlockable extras, and an upgrade to 25 playable characters and seven vehicles.

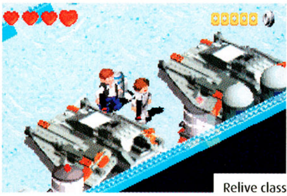
No matter which version of LEGO *Star Wars* II you play, one thing is almost certain: puns about the Rebels' blockade runner. —CHRIS H.


LSWII's character editor lets you make one pimpin' Jedi.

A galactic assortment of trousers!







Relive classic *Star Wars* moments in LEGO form.

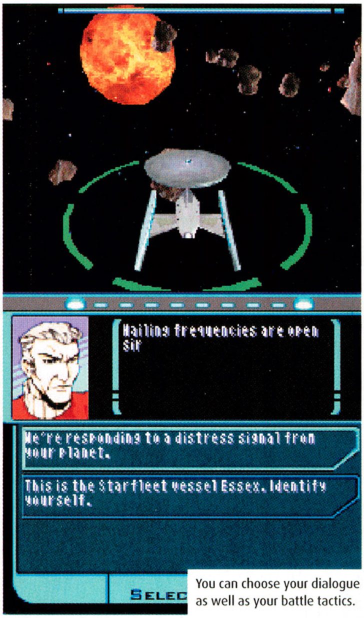
On the Right Trek

>STAR TREK: TACTICAL ASSAULT

PLATFORM: **DS** • PUBLISHER: **BETHESDA SOFTWORKS**
DEVELOPER: **QUICKSILVER** • RELEASE: **SEPTEMBER 2006**

Wipe the dust off your *Star Trek* encyclopedia and brush up on your Klingon language skills—Star Trek: Tactical Assault is on its way to DS. The action in Tactical Assault resembles the PC title Starfleet Command in many ways, consisting of real-time space battles coupled with heavy combat strategy. But developer Quicksilver has reimagined the battle system for the DS hardware. Players will be able to control just about everything via the touch screen, from moving a ship to recharging its shields.

Trekkies will appreciate Tactical Assault's deep-rootedness in *Star Trek* history, which plays out through the game's two distinct campaign modes. The Federation campaign begins in the year 2284 (just before *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Kahn* takes place), whereas the Klingon campaign starts just after the Khitomer Massacre of 2346. Check out our interview with the game's producer at www.nintendo.com for many more revealing details, including info on head-to-head Wi-Fi play! —ANDY M.

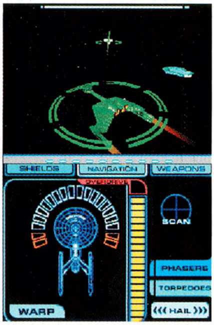


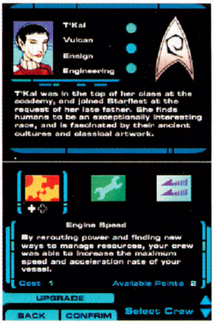
Hailing frequencies are open Sir

We're responding to a distress signal from your planet.

This is the Starfleet vessel Essex. Identify yourself.

You can choose your dialogue as well as your battle tactics.





T'Kal
Vulcan
Ensign
Engineering

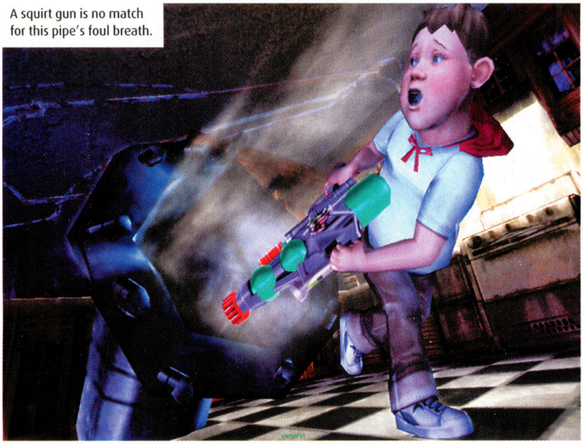
T'Kal was in the top of her class at the academy, and joined Starfleet at the request of her late father. She finds humans to be an exceptionally interesting race, and is fascinated by their ancient cultures and classical artwork.

Engine Speed

By rerouting power and finding new ways to manage resources, your crew was able to increase the maximum speed and acceleration rate of your vessel.

Cost 1
Available Points 2

A squirt gun is no match for this pipe's foul breath.



House of Horrors

>MONSTER HOUSE

PLATFORM: **GCN, DS, GBA** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **A2M** • RELEASE: **JULY 2006**

For anyone who's afraid of things that go bump in the night, here's a chance to get a little revenge! The upcoming animated movie *Monster House* features three mischievous children who wander into a haunted house in their neighborhood, only to have to fight their way out and protect the street from the dangers of the evil mansion. The licensed video game is coming out on GCN, DS, and GBA this summer to coincide with the movie's release. In addition to reenacting scenes from the movie, the games also feature unique areas and adventures. In all three versions, you'll alternate control between the three characters—each child has a special ability, as well as a water blaster to take care of enemies such as possessed dining-room chairs and ghostly flying books. The children will have to work together to make it through the labyrinthine corridors and get out in one piece. Don't fret—the family-friendly horrors are tame enough that even your mom will keep her eyes open during the scary parts. —CHRIS S.

DARK ARTS

Feast your eyes on an exclusive first look at Konami's latest DS masterpiece, Castlevania: Portrait of Ruin.

By Steve Thomason

Castlevania. It's one of the most hallowed names in all of gaming. It's a name that carries with it more memorable experiences than almost any other; a name that consistently lives up to not only its storied heritage, but the ever-lofty expectations of its devoted followers. Since 1986, we've hunted vampires on more than 10 platforms and across nearly a millennium of history. To celebrate the gothic high adventure's 20th anniversary, producer Koji "Iga" Igarashi and his team are inviting us back to Dracula's castle this fall, whip in hand, for an intriguing new chapter in the Castlevania legacy.

"I truly feel that defeating even a weak zombie should be rewarding."—Koji Igarashi

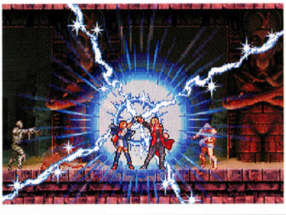
Two to Tango

Whereas Aria of Sorrow and Dawn of Sorrow gave us a glimpse of the near future, Portrait of Ruin returns to the past; more specifically, to World War II. Harnessing the abundance of unrested souls produced by the war's bloodshed, a mysterious vampire named Brauner is attempting to restore the house of Dracula. Fortunately, not one, but two heroes stand in his way: Charlotte, a magic-user affiliated with the church, and Jonathan Morris, a young vampire-hunter. If that last name sounds familiar to hard-core fans, it's because his father, John Morris Sr., battled Dracula in Castlevania: Bloodlines for the Sega Genesis (see the Tracing the Bloodline sidebar).

Portrait's gameplay, however, sticks to the exploration-heavy approach established by more-recent games in the series, but with an additional twist—the ability to switch between two playable characters on the fly. Jonathan is the more-traditional Castlevania protagonist, relying primarily on physical attacks. Though he sets out with the series' iconic whip, he can also wield other weapons such as a sword or mace, much like Dawn of Sorrow's Soma Cruz. Charlotte, meanwhile, boasts a wide variety of magical skills (among them, the ability to transform into animals). Using these two very different characters in concert is essential to their survival. Some of Charlotte's spells, for instance, can take quite a while to cast, leaving the sorceress vulnerable. Once you've initiated the spell, you'll need to switch to Jonathan and protect your partner from harm until she can complete the incantation. While playing as either Jonathan or Charlotte, you can also summon the other character to launch continuous strikes, help you get past a particular obstacle (for example, one character can give the other a boost to reach a high ledge), or unleash a powerful combination attack. Judging by what we've seen, it all works seamlessly and promises to add new depth to the Castlevania formula.

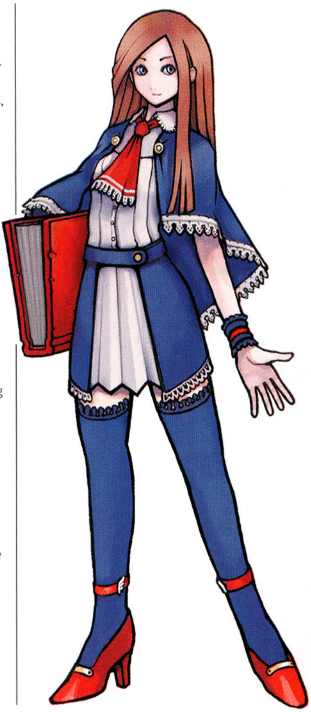
Tools of the Trade

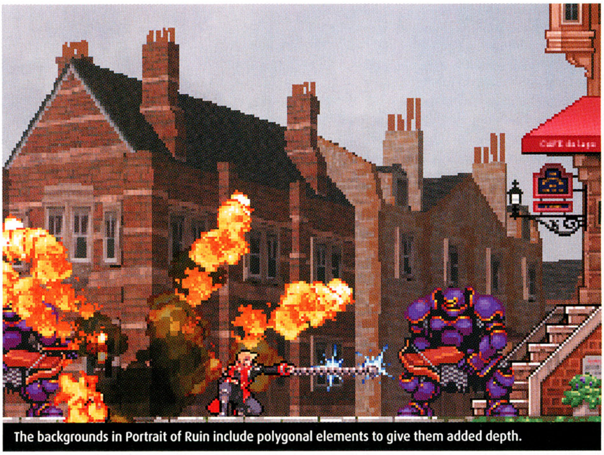
As in most Castlevania titles since Symphony of the Night (the first one produced by Iga), your characters will level up over the course of the adventure and find a variety of items, armor, and accessories strewn throughout the castle. In fact, those elements will play a greater role than they have in the most-recent games. "Personally, with Dawn of Sorrow, I thought we focused too much on the souls," says Iga. "It took away from the various other items in the game. So as a player, you only cared about getting souls. I wanted to let the player know that the other items are also important. I wanted to put more focus on those." Not focusing on one particular element gives the game a broader scope reminiscent of Symphony of the Night. But the concept behind the tactical souls hasn't disappeared completely. "[The souls] in Dawn of Sorrow gave meaning to defeating even the weakest enemies, like zombies," opines Iga. "You wanted to collect their unique souls. That was an important element. In this game, you don't collect souls, but I truly feel that defeating even a weak zombie should be rewarding." To that end, Iga and his team have implemented a new skill system. By completing certain quests—say, collecting eight zombie eyeballs—one of your characters will earn a new skill. These skills range from new magic spells (for Charlotte) and sub-weapon attacks (for Jonathan) to special abilities like the good old double jump. "That way, defeating even smaller enemies will have some importance or purpose," Iga points out. Teaching the heroes each new skill is the ghost of "a combatant from the previous war," according to Iga. Whether the apparition has any connection to Bloodlines, which took place during World War I, the producer won't say.



All in the Family

The family theme, always an important element of the series, is even more significant in Portrait of Ruin. Of course, the first family that comes to mind when talking about Castlevania is the Belmonts. The famous clan of vampire-hunters went missing for most of the 20th century according to series lore, but Vampire Killer, the family's legendary whip passed down from generation to generation, will nonetheless play a big role in Portrait of Ruin. "When you begin the game, Jonathan is carrying a whip, but he can't use Vampire Killer yet," explains Iga. "The Morris family is related to the Belmonts,



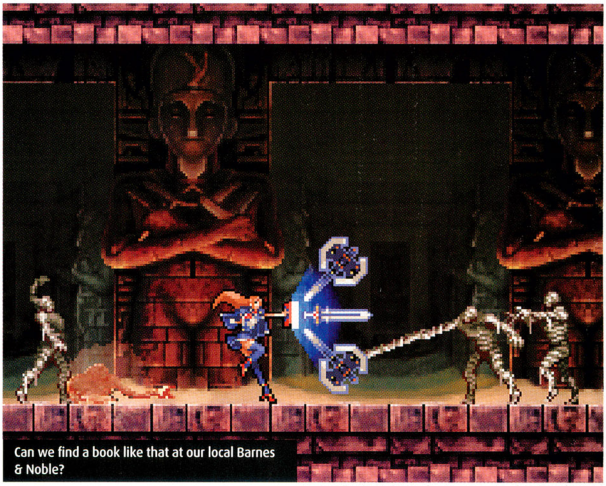


The backgrounds in Portrait of Ruin include polygonal elements to give them added depth.

but there is a difference between the two families. A Belmont is inherently capable of using Vampire Killer without any special instructions or abilities just because he's a Belmont. But someone from the Morris family has to do something special in order to use it. You'll find out what I mean by that when you play the game."

For those wondering if we'll see a dash of romance between Jonathan and Charlotte, Iga insists that their relationship is purely platonic. "They've known each other since childhood. And both their families are devoted to fighting evil. Other than that, there is no deeper connection. [Laughs]" Charlotte's family, according to Iga, is somehow related to the Fernandez clan. (Carrie Fernandez was one of the protagonists in Castlevania for N64.)

Just as Jonathan is following in the footsteps of his father, Brauner's twin daughters—Stella and Loretta—share their father's goal of resurrecting Dracula. Compared to the Morris family, however, things between Brauner and his offspring are a bit more complicated. "Brauner wants to summon Dracula's castle, but he doesn't want the twins to get involved," explains Iga. "As a father, he doesn't want to put them in danger. But the two are actively working to protect their father at the same time." How this family affair affects the game's events could prove most interesting.

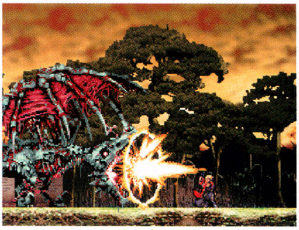

Can we find a book like that at our local Barnes & Noble?

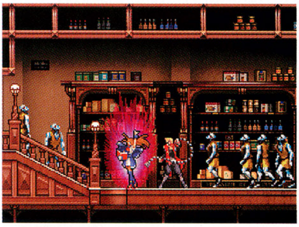
The Far Corners of Evil

In addition to being a powerful vampire and a loving father, Brauner is also an accomplished painter. Hence the game's subtitle. "We've been using musical terms for the subtitles recently, like Symphony of the Night," Iga reminds us. "But when you think of major art forms, the other one that comes to mind is painting. So I thought, why don't we try something with paintings for this new project?" You'll find Brauner's works hanging throughout the castle, but they serve as much more than just elegant decoration. Each one can transport you to a different locale, from the deserts of Egypt to a London-inspired city called Misty Town. Your travels lend the game some extra variety from both a visual and audio standpoint. The soundtrack, composed by famed series maestro Michiru Yamane, has a bit of ethnic flare specific to each destination. At the same time, it retains the series' strong gothic identity, resulting in something that sounds new and exotic, yet hauntingly familiar.

Despite the occasional outdoor excursion, the majority of the adventure still takes place within the walls of an enormous castle. Like previous Iga-produced games in the series, the level design has a Metroid-esque focus on exploration that means you won't be able to reach certain areas until you've acquired a certain item or skill. Within this structure, each outdoor area serves as a subdungeon of sorts. Iga promises that the game will be even larger than Dawn of Sorrow. Perhaps more impressively, it will also boast a greater number of enemies. Says Iga, "I'm even bringing back monster designs from Symphony of the Night and Rondo of Blood. There's going to be a lot of enemies! [Laughs]"

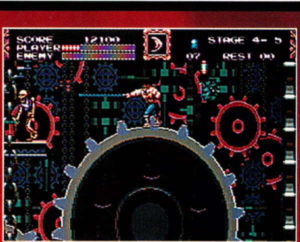
How can he be so ambitious with such a short development cycle? Many members of the team responsible for Castlevania: Circle of the Moon have been added to Iga's group (the two teams used to be separate). The result is a much larger development staff than the one that worked on Dawn of Sorrow.





TRACING THE BLOODLINE

The only game in the series ever released on the Sega Genesis, Castlevania: Bloodlines was set during the first World War and featured two playable characters: Belmont heir John Morris and his longtime friend, spear-wielding Eric Lecarde. John's father, Quincy (based on the character who slew the count in the novel *Bram Stoker's Dracula*), had killed Dracula 20 years earlier, but in Bloodlines, Dracula's niece, a witch named Elizabeth Bartley, starts the war so she can harvest the souls of fallen combatants to resurrect her uncle. Like Portrait of Ruin, Bloodlines is one of the few Castlevania games that takes players beyond Dracula's castle, with numerous stages set throughout Europe. When asked if Eric Lecarde or any other characters from Bloodlines would make an appearance in Portrait of Ruin, Iga responded slyly, "Please look forward to it."



BEYOND RUIN: IGA TALKS REMAKES, REVOLUTION, AND RETIREMENT

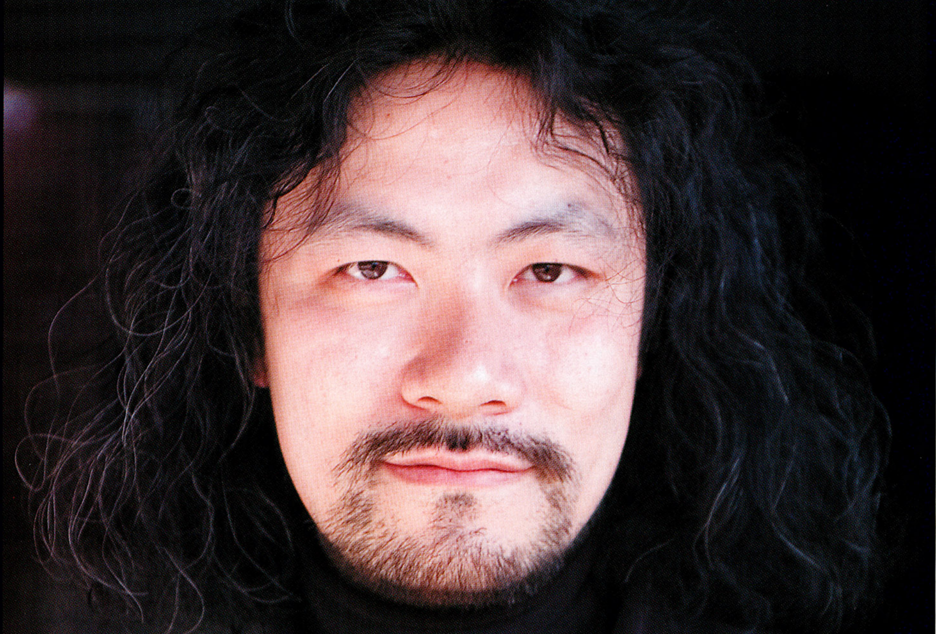


Photo courtesy of Jim Catechi

NP: Any thought or hints on when we'll see the game that takes place in 1999 and shows Dracula's final downfall at the hands of Julius Belmont?

Iga: I hope I can work on that story for a future project. Not only the game that takes place in 1999, but also revisiting Quincy Morris. I still haven't had the chance to expand on the story with Quincy Morris.

NP: Is it important to you to stay consistent within the Castlevania timeline?

Iga: I go case by case. It depends on the situation. I do my best to follow the timeline, though.

NP: Do you have these story elements planned out for the entire timeline, or is it developed primarily from game to game?

Iga: I'm always thinking about stories for the different time periods, but the most important part in game development is the gameplay system. After that, I try to decide how this game system best fits into the Castlevania timeline. In this case, with two playable characters in the game, it didn't fit with the 1999 story, for instance. So what we do is work on the game system first, then try to come up with the best match in the timeline.

NP: In some previous interviews, we've seen you express interest in remaking Castlevania III. Have you given any more thought to remaking any of the older Castlevania titles?

Iga: I'm always thinking about it. I need a good sales forecast, though, so I can make it happen. [Laughs] If I could get a good sales forecast, I could invest a lot of money in a remake. [Laughs] There are good Castlevania titles from the past that I do want to remake. I want to make them even better. Better quality means bigger budgets, though. [Laughs]

NP: You've been working on Castlevania for quite some time now. What maintains your passion for the series?

Iga: I guess I simply love the atmosphere of Castlevania. I love this world. And I'm an action-game fan. If time allows, I want to work on a shooting game, but forget about that for now. [Laughs] I can't make any shooting games within the Castlevania universe. I guess what makes me really passionate is that I always loved Castlevania as a gamer. As you said, I've been working on the series for a long time. My team members are growing. When I first started with the Castlevania series, I had to do everything. Brainstorm the storyline, work on the game system, do the character design, and all kinds of things. But now my team members are getting older and more experienced. They all work so closely together now, sharing their opinions about different aspects of the game. I don't have to involve myself in everything anymore. That's great for me. I guess I'm ready for retirement. [Laughs]

NP: What are your thoughts regarding the recent announcement of a Castlevania movie?

Iga: I cannot make any official comments for Konami. All I can say about the movie is what we've seen in the announcements from the film director. I love movies, though. I wish I could do some independent films myself. [Laughs]

NP: Has there been any talk of a Castlevania animated series?

Iga: I really like anime, too, so . . . [Laughs] One of the dilemmas I'm facing with Castlevania is that it's always game-oriented. Although there's some story elements, we're not providing a ton of background. I'm always looking for opportunities to create back-up materials, such as anime, or it could be the movie. Anything that could put a greater focus on the storyline. In Japan, we have Castlevania manga books, and in the US, you have the Castlevania comic from IDW Publishing. If there's anything that we could do aside from the video game, I'd love the opportunity. If time and money allow, then I would really love to shoot a movie. I could work on anime, but I can guarantee it wouldn't sell. [Laughs]

NP: Are you working on or planning any Revolution titles?

Iga: I can't say that I'm working on Revolution. I'm really busy with the DS game right now. I really like the controller, though, so if time allows and if Revolution is well-received, then I would love to work on it.

"I love 2-D games. I don't want to lose this style of game . . ." —Koji Igarashi

Form and Function

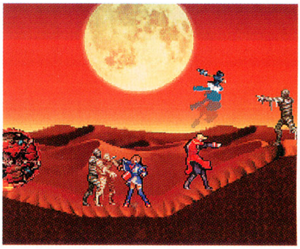
When it comes to using the DS's unique functionality, Iga is taking the approach of doing whatever best serves the Castlevania experience. As in Dawn of Sorrow, all of the action in Portrait of Ruin takes place on the bottom screen, while the top screen displays either enemy and player information, or a map that's updated in real time as you explore the castle. It may not be the sexiest use of the handheld's dual displays, but as any Castlevania fan will tell you, it's a godsend. "As for the touch screen," says Iga, "we came to the conclusion that we don't want to interrupt our action gameplay. So we decided not to use the touch panel like we did with the magic seals and breakable crystals in Dawn of Sorrow. [That] game was closer to the DS launch, so we felt pressure to utilize the touch screen. But now that we see a lot of competitors using it, we decided to just go with pure action."

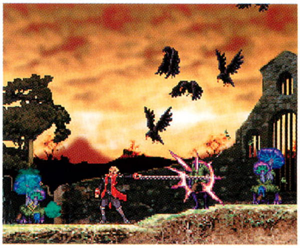
One DS feature that Iga intends to take full advantage of, however, is Wi-Fi play. The producer plans to include either a co-op mode, or a versus mode similar to the LAN battles in Dawn of Sorrow (the members of the NP staff on hand during the interview all blurted out "co-op!"). Whichever one he goes with, he wants it to play off of the dual protagonists. As you collect items in the game, you'll also be able to set up your own shop and sell your acquisitions to other players around the world.

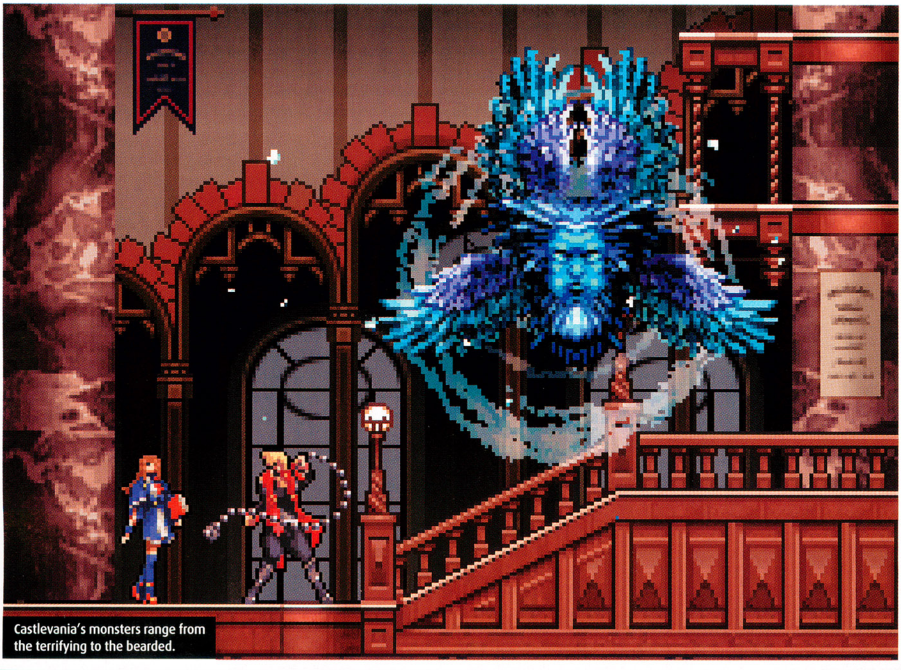
Art Appreciation

Keeping with tradition, Portrait of Ruin is shaping up to be another hand-drawn masterpiece. The game uses an upgraded version of the Dawn of Sorrow engine that allows for more effects and character sprites onscreen at once while maintaining the same stunning level of background detail. "Now that we've done one DS project, we're targeting the limits of the hardware," Iga claims. "We really want to challenge it. Since there are two characters, and one can back the other up, we're really thinking about throwing tons of enemies at the player at once." As an example, he showed us one room that contained over 20 zombies. Portrait of Ruin also boasts massive, multijointed monstrosities that are more impressive than anything we've seen in the series to date. The overall visual style will retain the anime influence we saw in Dawn of Sorrow (and feature another fully animated intro), but with a slightly older, more-adult feel.

When asked why he continues to create games in 2-D while the rest of the market trends toward polygons, Iga responds, "Personally, I love 2-D games. I don't want to lose this style of game, and I consider it the best match for the Nintendo DS. The number of artists who can draw by hand like this is getting smaller and smaller. I'm trying to train more. We need to preserve hand-drawn artistry!" Here's hoping he and his team preserve it for another 20 years.

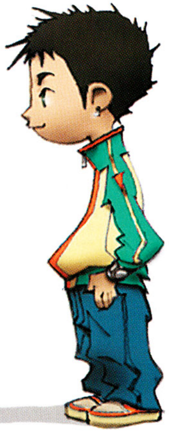






Castlevania's monsters range from the terrifying to the bearded.

Prepare for Contact



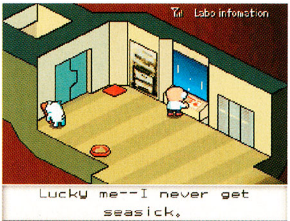
A new RPG from Grasshopper and Atlus crash-lands onto the Nintendo DS.

By Chris Shepperd

The RPG genre is beginning to get a foothold on the Nintendo DS. The newest addition to the ever-growing library is the critically acclaimed Contact, which will hit western shores later this year. Contact's main character, Terry, is an unassuming boy caught up in an adventure beyond his wildest imagination: sailing between foreign lands, meeting exotic people, and helping a kindly professor on a mysterious quest. He'll need to protect himself as best he can with a variety of weapons and special combat techniques at his disposal.

The game opens with Terry relaxing on a park bench, when suddenly a giant chunk of space rock falls from the sky. Soon thereafter, a spaceship lands nearby, and the peculiar-looking professor comes out, admonishing Terry to flee with him in his spaceship as a second, hostile craft begins to attack. Once Terry and the professor get into space, a skirmish ensues, and the professor's craft is forced to make an emergency landing on a tropical island on a foreign planet. Terry is tossed, unconscious, on to the shore. From that point on, it's up to you to help him put the pieces of the story together: Where is he? Who is the professor? Why were they attacked? These questions and more will be answered this summer as you help Terry explore Contact's mysterious and dangerous world.

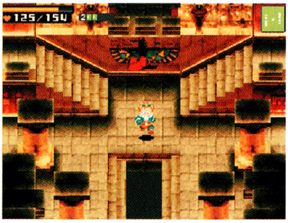
The plot then takes a surreal twist when the professor turns and addresses you, the player. It appears that not only do you control the main character, but you yourself also have a role in the story—the DS is some sort of window between your world and the game world, a window that the professor alone has discovered. The theme of you being more than just a witness to the events in the game was central in the development of Contact. "From the outset, our basic concept for this game has been that a game player can 'contact' the game world," director Akira Ueda explains. Moreover, Terry can't know you exist—it's a secret that you and the professor share. "These three will communicate and cooperate together, but the professor keeps secrets about you from the boy. The existence of you, the player, must be kept a mystery from the boy," Ueda says.

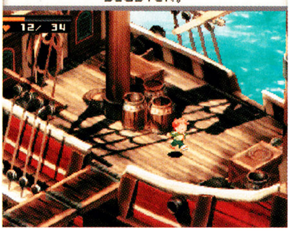


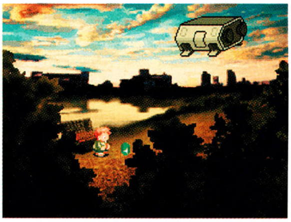
Lucky me--I never get seasick.

Of Seas and Cheese

Wherever this place is, you're definitely not alone. Many people inhabit the planet you've landed on—most of the folk are actually quite friendly, just going about their daily business, unaware of the mess that you've gotten yourself into. You can talk to people to gain useful information about







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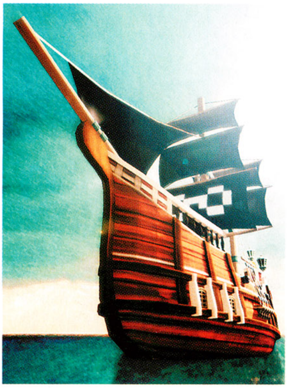
your surroundings, and merchants in the towns can provide you with weaponry, food, and implements to help you on your adventure. Once you get out into the wild, you'll find beasts of all shapes and sizes; they're not all hostile, but creatures that look benign might attack at any moment. You can fight virtually any living creature you encounter; however, if word gets around that you've attacked an innocent person or animal, people will react differently to your presence, sometimes violently.

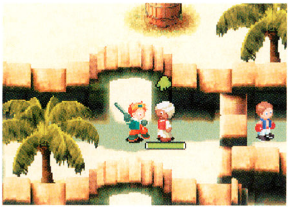
The planet where you and the professor have crash-landed is largely covered in water, so the professor has to improvise an interesting method of getting from one body of land to the next. While you were passed out on the beach, he was busy salvaging a sunken pirate ship from the sea floor and installing his spacecraft into its hull. The details of such a remarkable feat are rather sparse, but the result is an effective means to sail from one locale to the next—just return to the ship, set the coordinates, and be on your way. The pirate ship also serves as a hub for your adventures—you can return to it to take a hot, refreshing bath to revive your health, change clothes to change your abilities (more on this later), or nap in the stateroom to save the game. The professor never leaves the confines of his spaceship's cramped quarters, but you remain in constant contact with him via the DS's upper screen. He will monitor your progress and feed you helpful information, as well as warn you when your health is low. The professor also has a pet that spends most of its time in the spaceship, but occasionally you can summon the pet to aid you in battle. When you're traveling in the pirate ship, you can play with the pet on the touch screen, as well. Ueda hints that there may be advantages to such interaction: "If you keep communicating with the pet, it could be your great buddy when it's summoned to appear in battles."

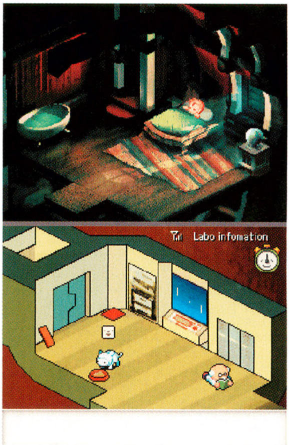

The resourceful professor has reassembled a lost pirate ship from the briny depths. You'll use the majestic vessel to sail around the world.

Throughout the adventure, you will find new outfits that you can change into back on the ship. These outfits not only adjust your stats in various ways, but allow you to perform specific techniques in battle. Some of the suits also allow you to perform certain tasks outside of battle, such as fishing and cooking. With the cooking suit, you can make food to increase your health and temporarily boost your stats in battle.

Defending Your Life

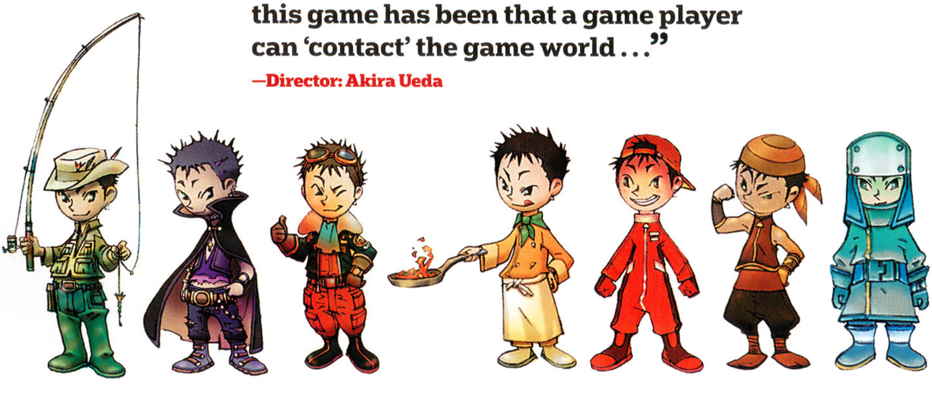
It's smart to choose your battles wisely, but sometimes you have no option other than to fight. The combat system is an interesting blend of RPG battle styles. At first look, it seems very much like the real-time combat system in the Mana series, in which you simply walk up to an enemy and begin slashing to attack it, and there are no battle screens or different modes to indicate that you've begun battle. In Contact, however, you'll attack


Every living thing, man or beast, is vulnerable to attack. But be careful—attack the wrong guy and you might have a serious fight on your hands.



While the main character catches some shut-eye, you'll have time to play with the professor's pet.

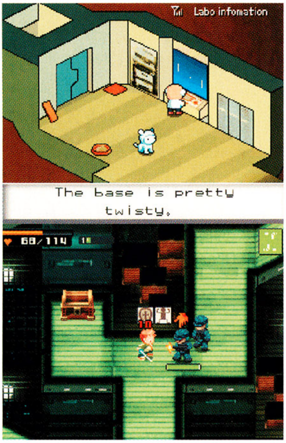
> "From the outset, our basic concept for this game has been that a game player can 'contact' the game world . . ."
>
> —Director: Akira Ueda

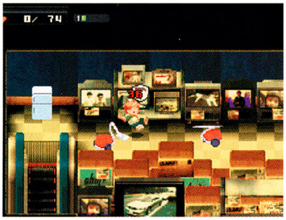


automatically if you are in range of a targeted enemy—how fast you attack is determined by your Speed stat, not by how fast you can mash the attack button. You spend most of your time exploring with your weapon sheathed—you must press the B Button to assume a fighting posture and target a nearby enemy. When your weapon is equipped, you aren't able to move around as quickly—by pressing B again, you can put your weapon away when you want to flee from battle or maneuver around your foe tactically. You can fight only one enemy at a time, and cycle through other enemies using the L Button. Once you've defeated an enemy, if there is another one in the area, you will target it automatically.

Slashing with a weapon isn't your only attack option, however. You also have a variety of special techniques that you can employ at any time during a battle by spending points called EP—the bigger the attack, the more EP it costs; you'll gradually refill EP as you continue to fight. As your character gets stronger and finds new outfits and weapons, you will learn more and more special techniques.

Success in battle will occasionally bring you an unusual reward—stickers will show up in an album that you carry with you. When the time is right, you can peel a sticker out of the album and lay it onto a monster, person, or item in the real world via the touch screen. The stickers serve various purposes: call for the professor's pet to aid you in battle, make a hasty retreat to your ship, trap a rare item, and perform a number of other tasks.

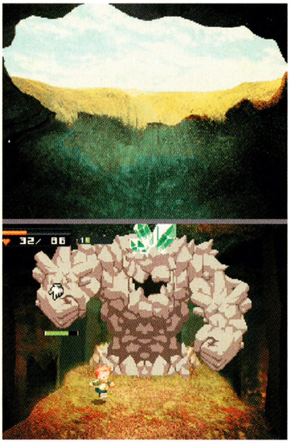




Even vacuum cleaners want a piece of you as you travel through a haunted department store.

Your Friend, the NPC

Via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, your friends from the real world will become characters in Contact. When you begin a new game, you enter your likes and dislikes. When you connect to other Contact players, you can exchange this information. Afterward, certain characters in the game will take on the personas of the friends you've exchanged information with. The system builds on a theme that was very important to the designers—to incorporate the real world of the gamer into the world of the game. "You will feel like these real friends turned into different figures and live in the world of Contact. Of course, this function contributes to your play and game strategies," elaborates Ueda. How much Wi-Fi interaction will affect game strategy is still unknown—we'll see what happens when the game goes live in North America.



The boss fights are not only a lot of fun, they show off the best of Contact's refined graphic style.

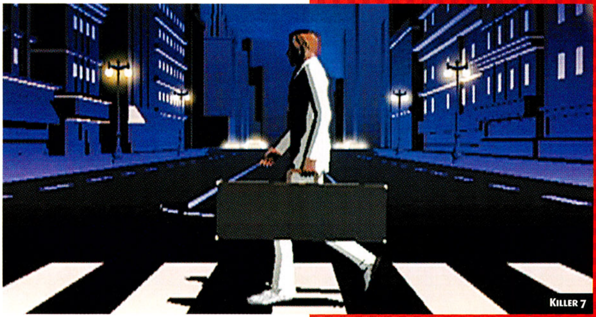
Killer Pedigree

Suda 51
Akira Ueda

Photo provided by *Weekly Famitsu*

Contact is the most recent project from Grasshopper, the studio best known for 2005's avant-garde console thriller Killer 7. But don't expect more of the same wild plot twists with Contact—the game's development started while Killer 7 was still in progress, and has had its own, separate team the whole time. In fact, the Contact team had more to do with the Game Boy Advance RPG Shining Soul II, a top-down action-RPG, than with Killer 7. Contact began life as a GBA title, but when the DS was announced, the team decided to take advantage of the system's unique characteristics. We asked Director Ueda about the platform change, and he explained that using the DS's features "was like working out an adventure game. The variety of functions on the DS gives us unlimited ideas."

Suda 51, the creator of Killer 7 and owner of Grasshopper, paid close attention to Contact's development, but for the most part let Ueda work independently. "Mr. Ueda's genre and style are different from mine, but he is a creator who thinks a great deal about innovation," Suda 51 comments. "Mr Ueda's ideas are very strong—I'm not worried about whether Killer 7 influences his directorial decision-making."



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Golden Homunculus
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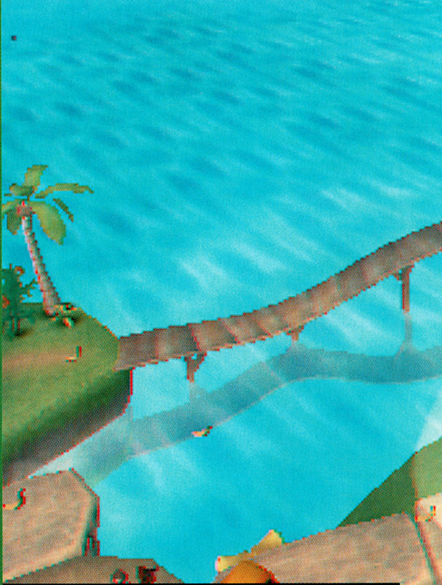
PLANET OF THE APES

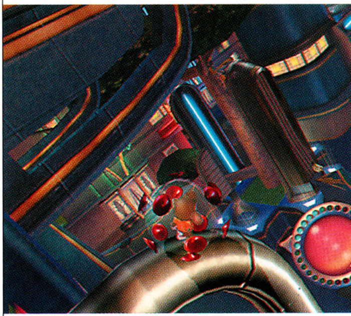
In Super Monkey Ball Adventure on GCN, Sega's playful primates encounter a whole new world of fun.

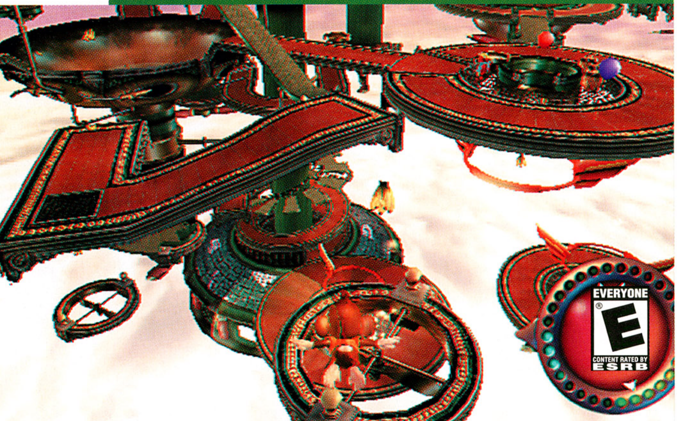
By Chris Hoffman

Part twitch action, part puzzle, part adventure, and 100 percent pure Monkey Ball, Super Monkey Ball Adventure expands upon the formula established by previous games in the series with a story-based quest, new abilities, new party games, and massive themed worlds. The encapsulated primates are embarking on their biggest and possibly best outing yet.



On occasion, the monkey ball will open up and act as a glider, allowing your monkey to survey the game's amazing worlds, such as the lush, tropical paradise of Monkey Island.





More Fun than a Barrel of Monkeys

Sega's merry monkeys are heading out to see the world. In previous Monkey Ball games, the adorable primates were relegated to navigating puzzlelike courses that hung precariously in the sky, but in Super Monkey Ball Adventure, the sphere-encased simians are venturing out into the land of Monearth where—as the title implies—a vast adventure awaits. Instead of short, timed stages, Adventure will take the monkeys to sprawling lands ranging from tropical islands to urban jungles to underwater cities, filled with puzzles to solve, obstacles to overcome, characters to meet, and environments to interact with. The monkeys can bounce off flower-shaped jump pads to reach new areas, spin turnstiles to open doors, and launch out of cannons to travel great distances.

Players are also tasked with completing numerous quests in each of the game's five worlds. Quests take on myriad forms—smashing beehives to help a beekeeper, lighting fires to restore a lighthouse, and rolling along rails to activate timed mechanisms, just as examples—but they all have to do with helping monkeys in need. Around 10 to 12 quests exist in each world, and completing 60 percent of them will unlock the next realm.

What really gets the ball rolling this time out is the new Monkey Chant system. As it turns out, monkey balls aren't made of plastic; they consist of magical force fields, and by using special chants, AiAi and company can transform them into eight different forms. When players press the chant button, they'll call up a menu with four words—"Yay," "Ei," "Woo," and "Poo"—each assigned to a different direction on the Control Pad. By combining these words, the monkeys can access various powers learned throughout their adventure, including the Boxing Ball (which utilizes a springy boxing glove similar to the one in the Monkey Fight party game), Sticky Ball (which uses suction cups to climb certain surfaces), Scaler Ball (which has the ability to grow larger), Wood Ball (which floats in water and can be set on fire), and Invisiball (take a guess). Monkey Chants—in addition to precise gaming skill—are players' tools for getting past the Naysayers (obstaclelike enemies that feed off of negative emotions) and restoring peace and happiness to feuding monkey kingdoms.

While the scope of the monkey business is changing, the successful gameplay remains. Though all of Super Monkey Ball Adventure's added features may make it sound like a 3-D platformer, it's more appropriate to think of the game as Monkey Ball with grander ambition. The developers at Traveller's Tales have re-created the familiar Monkey Ball mechanics beautifully, letting players tilt each colorful world to control their roly-poly monkey; using the terrain to your advantage is a must, and perish the thought of pressing a button to jump. Of course, there are still plentiful bananas to collect, and fall-outs (falling off the edge of the world to your demise) will punish the careless. Players can even choose their favorite monkey—AiAi, MeeMee, GonGon, or Baby—at the game's outset, even though they have identical abilities.

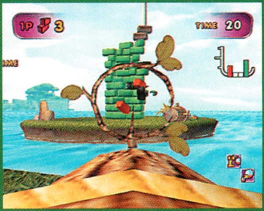
The Monkey Ball faithful may especially appreciate the inclusion of traditional, timed Monkey Puzzle stages, several of which are found in each world. Occasionally, locked doors will halt the monkeys' progress, and only by conquering enough of these puzzles of the spiritual plane will players force the doors open and be able to proceed. Unfortunately, the Monkey Chants won't work in the puzzle stages; good thing you get infinite retries.

In addition to Adventure's single-player mode, the game features the multiplayer fun that the series is known for. Adventure offers six party games for up to four players, including returning favorites like Monkey Race, and new modes such as Monkey Castle, where you'll launch monkeys from a cannon in an attempt to topple your opponents' fortresses. If this is giving you the urge to monkey around, don't worry; you won't have long to wait. The Adventure begins this summer.

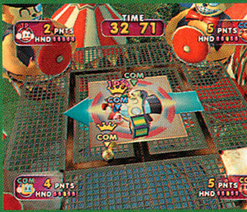
Party Animals

When restoring happiness to the Monkey Ball world gets to be too much, you can kick back with fellow simians and play one of Super Monkey Ball Adventure's six party games, which offer fun for up to four players. Three new games join three returning favorites in a wacky variety of monkey mayhem.

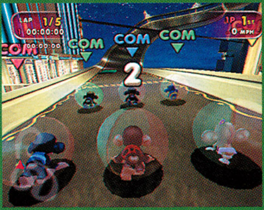
Alongside the party games shown below, Adventure also includes an updated version of Monkey Target (fly through the air and try to reach multiple waypoints), Monkey Bounce (hop on levitating block grids in an attempt to claim the most territory), and Monkey Balloon (run around on a globe, collecting or popping balloons while laying bombs and banana traps). Some of the party games are unlocked by collecting bananas in the game's single-player mode.



In the all-new Monkey Castle, players fortify stone-block fortresses, then launch monkeys from cannons in an attempt to topple their opponents' structures. Talk about live ammo.



Beware of falling monkeys! In Monkey Fight, the boxing-glove-equipped apes duke it out on a precarious platform, punching each other over the edge to score points.



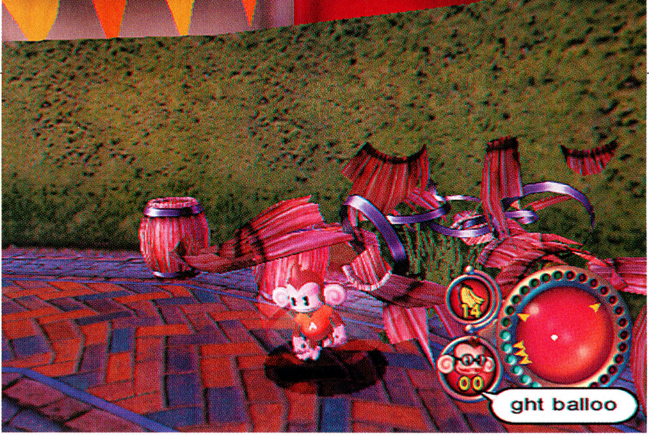
If there's one thing a monkey in a ball is good for, it's rolling, which is probably why Monkey Race has been a multiplayer mainstay since the series' inception.

© 2006 SEGA Corporation.

Having a Ball

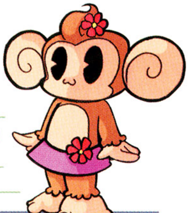
As anyone who's played Super Monkey Ball knows, it takes a delicate touch to handle fiesty simians properly. Sega's Marty Caplan, the game's US producer, speaks on what kind of care went into taking monkey mania to the next level.

Nintendo Power: What was the reason for evolving the Super Monkey Ball formula into what we're seeing with Super Monkey Ball Adventure?
Marty Caplan: We have these really beloved characters, and they're supercute, and the gameplay is supersolid and really fun. We thought that by adding a story mode to it, which is what's happening in Monkey Ball Adventure, we're going to have all the stuff that everybody really loves about the original games—the puzzles, the multiplayer party games—and you get to know a little bit more about the monkeys and their world, and you get to meet more than 60 new characters that also populate all the different islands that they live on. It's a chance for us to take AiAi and MeeMee and GonGon and Baby into the next sort of iconic level.



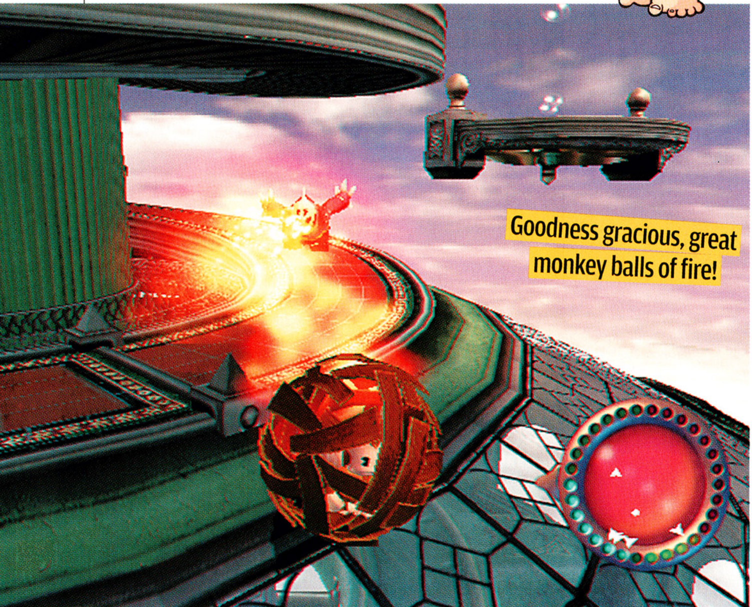
Smashing through barrels to find hidden bananas is one of many things the monkeys will do on their adventure.

> **"Because you're asking, 'Why? Why are they in the balls?' With this story, you're going to find out why they're in the balls."**



NP: One of the things that was great about the original games is how simple and accessible they were. How are you trying to maintain that in Adventure?
MC: There's a few different ways that we're doing that. We're being very careful and checking with the Japanese teams all the time, and they keep us very honest. They keep us focused on making it very fun while we expand it in the ways I described. What we're trying to do in a major way is build all those fun things that were in the puzzle realms and in the party games, like the boxing gloves and bouncing around [and] racing, into these bigger worlds as part of what you have to do to do quests. Another example is gliding. And there are cannons in the big world that you can step into and launch yourself to finish a quest or get to a hidden area or get to another part of the world. You use the same mechanic, and it's just as fun, but it's in the context of a bigger story.

NP: One of the things I noticed while playing is that the game feels exactly like the original Monkey Ball games.
MC: [Super Monkey Ball creator Toshihiro] Nagoshi approves everything. Sega of Japan is very protective of all their IP [intellectual property], and it's really an honor that they're letting us explore things, especially this new stuff. Japanese companies can sometimes be very overprotective of their brands, and it says something about how much they trust the quality of Traveller's Tales and Sega Europe and Sega America to really try and do something new with one of their really popular and successful brands.

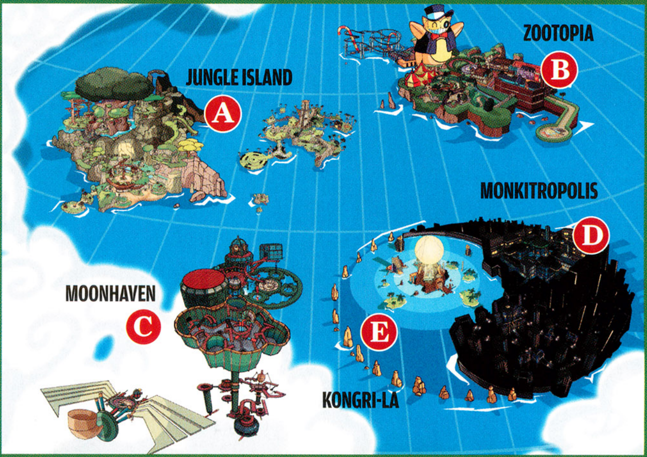


Goodness gracious, great monkey balls of fire!

The Wood Ball is good for two things: floating on water and getting set on fire. Don't worry, roast monkey isn't on the menu—instead, the apes can use the flames to solve puzzles.

Welcome to the Jungle (and Beyond)

The realm of Monearth is a strange and wondrous place. Here's how the developers at Traveller's Tales describe the game's five worlds.



A "Jungle Island is a self-sufficient, picturesque group of islands, with a warm tropical climate and scenic views. Its local delicacy is barbequed bananas, and it is known for its well-kept gardens."

B "Zootopia is the longest established and biggest theme park in Monearth. Originally started by Ma D'Kee and Pa D'Kee, it has been in the D'Kee family for generations."

C "The monkey-made city of Moonhaven consists of a number of plateaus that constantly hover way above the Mid-Monkey Sea. The city has been dubbed the 'greatest wonder of the industrial age.'"

D "Monkitropolis is one of the largest cities in Monearth. It is a bustling urban jungle, with vast buildings and complex road networks. It is a sunless kingdom lit by the glow of advertising and bright lights."

E "Kongri-La is an underwater paradise, kept dry by the hulking cavernous structures that encase its population. An underwater citadel is located in Tropolis Bay and is highlighted by its large tethered Sun."

NP: What do you think is the main appeal of Monkey Ball, and more importantly, the appeal of monkeys?
MC: The appeal of monkeys is that they touch that place deep inside where us as humans used to be monkeys, according to some people, and we are all very curious. And what's more curious than a monkey in a ball? Not many things, I can tell you. Because you're asking, "Why? Why are they in the balls?" With this story, you're going to find out why they're in the balls. So that's a big appeal.

NP: During the design process, was there ever talk of taking the monkey out of the ball?
MC: Oh yes, there was. And with the gliding, they're kind of out of the ball, a little bit. There was talk of it. We decided not to do that . . . and that came directly from Japan. They had a really good reason behind it, which was that the ball isn't just plastic. It's actually something else. It's a technological/magic thing that can be transformed, and so that gave us all the leeway we needed to make all these chants that let you get all these powers and stuff. That's their superpower . . . there's no reason to mess with their superpower as long as you can adapt and evolve them to be even cooler and let them do even more than before.

NP: Can you explain some of the themes of the game, especially how they tie in to the enemies and the game plot?
MC: One of the underlying messages of the game is that misunderstanding causes unhappiness. If people just communicated better, they would have a lot better time and be happier people all around. So a lot of the dilemmas and things that are problems in the world are caused by the fact that the monkeys are just being stubborn and not communicating and being selfish or only thinking of themselves. Bad monkeys. The overarching story is sort of a Romeo-and-Juliet story where two monkeys [from opposing tribes] have a . . .

NP: Forbidden monkey love?
MC: You said it, I didn't. Actually, it's a perfect description. So they've sort of run off and this has caused even worse enmity between the two kings of their families, and it's sort of filtered down into all these different places in the Monkey Ball characters' world. This kind of unhappiness and people being missing and things going wrong and problems occurring are all sort of causing the emergence of these villains called the Naysayers, and they sort of infest the world, kind of like weeds that are growing because of the unhappiness. So the job of the main characters is to go around and solve people's problems to make them happier, and also, you can collect bananas and donate bananas to make people feel better. As you do that, more gameplay areas get unlocked, and you learn more about what's really going on and eventually you figure out where the two lovers are and how to get them back together.

NP: Now the question on everyone's mind: How come most of the monkeys don't have pants?
MC: Monkeys don't need to wear pants. Because they have fur.

NP: Well, I think some of the royals wear pants. Is there some sort of social pants stratification? Some pants/no pants hierarchy?
MC: Well, monkeys that are unhappy inside, they wear pants. And the monkeys that are happy on the inside, they don't need to wear pants.

NP: Just like with humans.
MC: (laughs) I know.

Naysayers block the monkeys' progress, and can be beaten or circumnavigated only by using Monkey Chant abilities.

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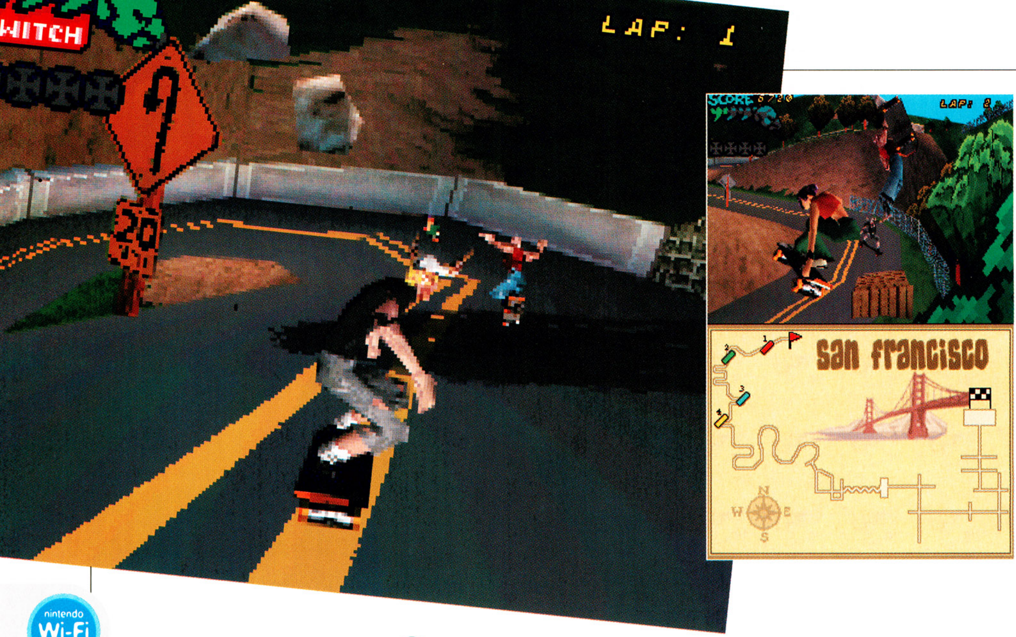

Gravity Game

The Hawk soars to the world's peaks for **Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam**, the four-player Wi-Fi racing follow-up to American Sk8land.

By George Sinfield

Activision's Tony Hawk franchise is going downhill—but in a good way—for this fall's Nintendo-exclusive Tony Hawk's Downhill Jam (working title), a huck-huck-boom-jam of a racing game that takes place on the world's steepest hills. The pro skater's signature tricks come into play as he and a crew of new fictional characters build up their boost power through grinds, grabs, and flips then really rip it for a big finish. Vicarious Visions, the team behind Tony Hawk's American Sk8land for the DS and GBA, is providing the technology for the Birdman's gravity-powered tour. We spoke to VV's CEO Karthik Bala for the scoop on its fall DS release.

BIGGER, BETTER, FASTER

For Sk8land, Bala explains, "We really tried to push the capabilities of the DS as much as we knew and looked at gameplay that was going to take advantage of the platform's unique strengths." Working from the foundation of a successful 3-D skater, the company is pushing the limits even further for its follow-up. The race courses for Downhill Jam are approximately three times the size of Sk8land's California-themed skateparks, and the developers are able to offer wide variety in the large environments by way of texture streaming: "Typically in handheld racing games, [each course follows] a single theme because you're throwing all the residual detail and textures in memory and you have limited memory. But [for Downhill Jam] we're continually streaming in animation and textures, so the visual quality increases significantly." In the game's San Francisco level, for example, participants start in a natural environment with grass, trees, and a windy road, then fly into the city, where they skate around cars and pedestrians, and over cobblestone streets—the race transitioning smoothly from one type of environment to the next. "It's amazing how we keep finding new tricks and techniques with the hardware," says Bala. "It's a heck of a lot more powerful than anybody thought."

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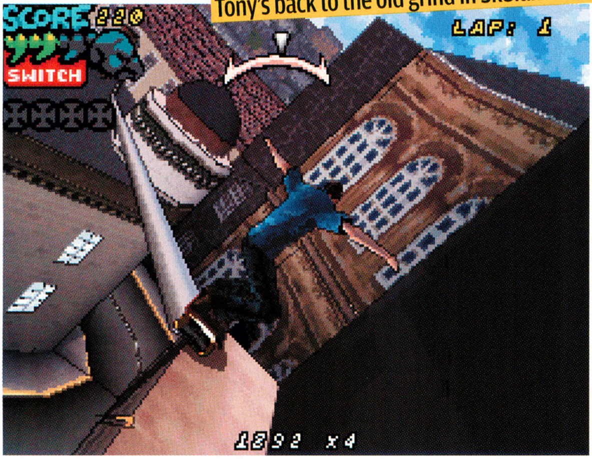
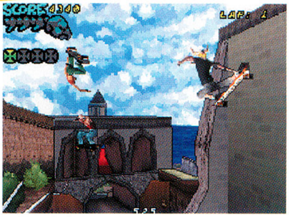
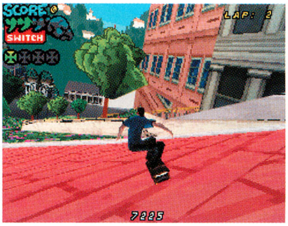
Tony's back to the old grind in Sk8land's sequel.







SHOW THEM HOW YOU ROLL

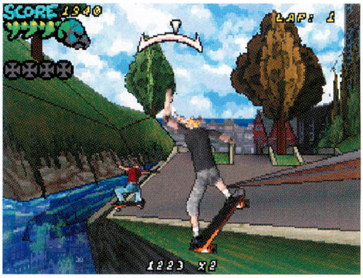
The size of the environments allows for multiple paths through every race. Some paths, such as open streets, let players show off their straight racing skills. Other paths—littered with wires, ledges, and ramps—give trick-oriented riders more chances to build boost power for explosive passing at crucial moments. The developers hope that the complexity of the environments will encourage people to play and replay races, looking for new routes.

To get the most out of the levels, the team considers gameplay first. "We really focus on the design of all the [skating] lines and get the geometry perfect while we're working on different visual styles," explains Bala. "Once the designers have it locked down, the artists can come in and do a really good beauty pass on it and optimize the visual quality."

CLASSIC MODE REVISITED

In addition to the racing World Tour mode, the designers are planning an objective-based Jam Session, which is similar to Sk8land's Classic mode. The Vicarious Visions team has learned a lot about how players skate through Classic mode by watching Sk8land replays. Even though the timer in Sk8land expires after two minutes, a loophole allows players to go behind that, as long as they sustain a trick combo. The time extension has led to scores that exceed the game's maximum of 100 million points for a run. In Jam Session, runs will carry a strict three-minute time limit, and require participants to cross the finish line before time expires to make the run a candidate for uploading to the Wi-Fi community. "With the 100-million-point thing, the forum was in an uproar," confesses Bala. "With Jam Session, that run doesn't count unless you get to the bottom in time. So you have to rethink how you do this. It puts a new spin on Classic mode." Also putting a spin on Classic mode is the fact that everything runs downhill, making it extra tricky to collect items, such as the traditional S-K-A-T-E and C-O-M-B-O letters, as players will have only one pass per run at each object.

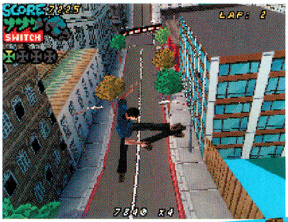
Those who download other players' runs not only will be able to watch them, as in Sk8land, but they'll be able to skate along with them, racing against the recorded data, picking up shortcuts, and getting ideas for good trick locations along the way.

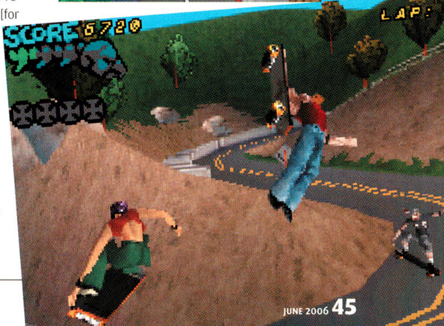


SKATE PRO STYLE

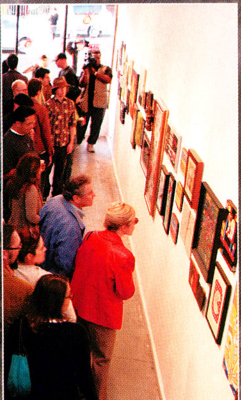
When members of the Sk8land Wi-Fi community are not uploading and downloading trick-packed replays, they're sharing graffiti tags and board art. The feature has been much more popular than the developers expected—so popular, in fact, that some players use the paint tool as their primary way of interacting with the community. "A lot of people playing the game aren't very good skaters, but they're joining crews as the [designated] artist," says Bala. Crews are getting competitive, some modifying existing art and calling it their own. "So these players are demanding IP protection for the work that they're doing," Bala adds. "We're developing software [for Downhill Jam] that gives authorship to tagging. The original author's name is preserved." In addition to graffiti and board art, Downhill Jam will allow players to create and share clothing designs, and provide more colors to choose from by offering RGB sliders.

If you play well with others, you'll likely be impressed with the game's four-player racing events (Sk8land maxed out at two players). Additional details will be revealed as the game's release approaches. For a related story on the Sk8land Wi-Fi community, see the Community section, page 91.



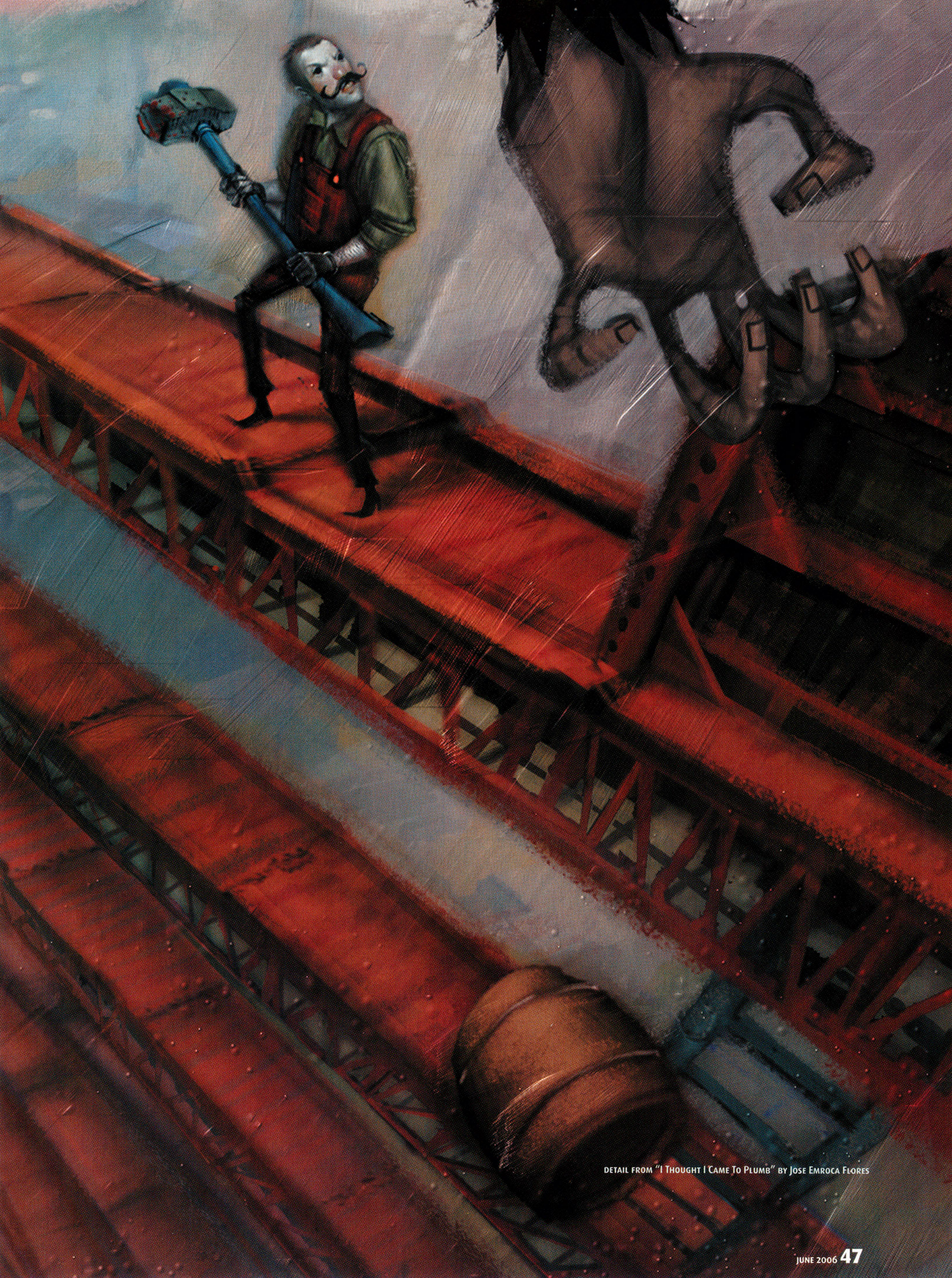


framing the game

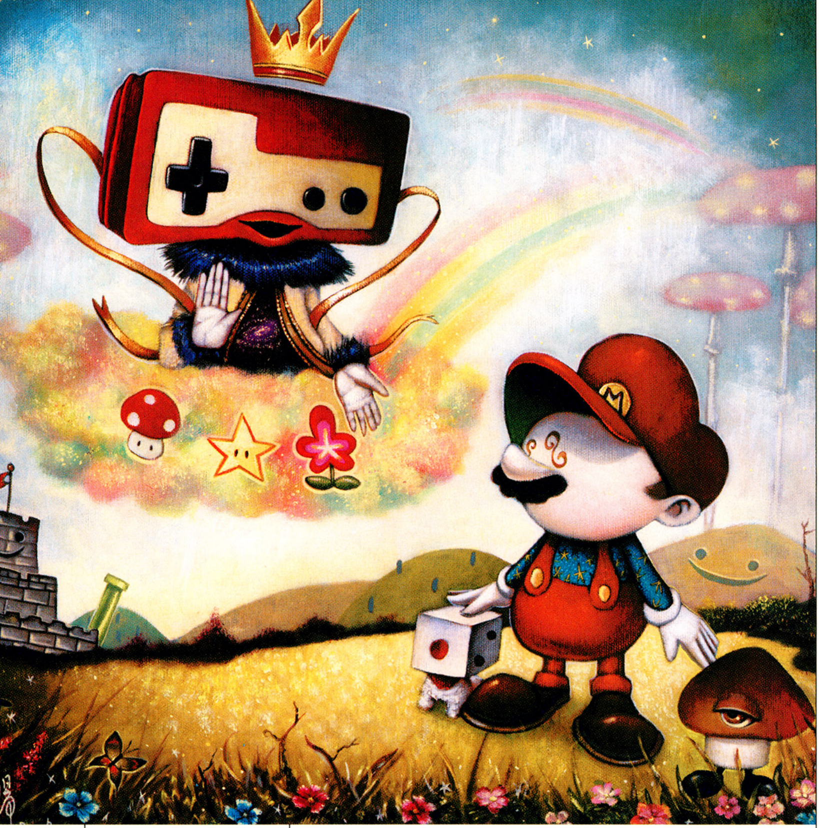


Mario got stuck in their heads in the '80s. Now the **I Am 8-Bit** artists show the world how Nintendo's heroes look two decades later on canvas. How will the dreamers behind the exhibition top last year's sensational LA debut? NP gets the inside story.

By Steven Grimm



detail from "I Thought I Came To Plumb" by Jose Emroca Flores



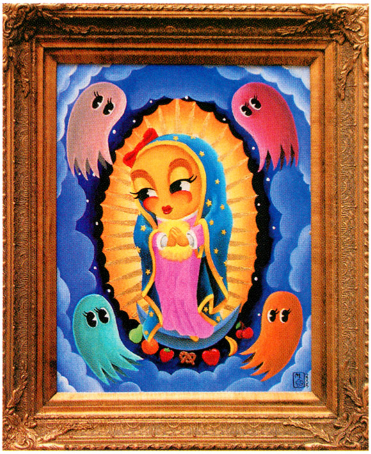
"Untitled" by Yosuke Ueno

Donkey Kong's arcade debut never seemed remotely like the dark and dangerous Mario-vs.-beast scene in "I Thought I Came to Plumb." (previous page) The '81 game was vivid and bouncy, wasn't it? That's not the way artist Jose Emroca Flores sees it 25 years later. The artist has added much, like an industrial wasteland and a leaner, meaner Mario, but the painting is also faithful to the essentials. The barrels, the hammer, the ladders—it's all there, though seen through the eye of an artist who has a highly personal connection with Donkey Kong.

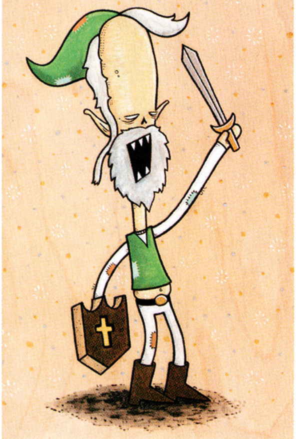
And that's the spirit behind I Am 8-Bit Version 2.006, which runs at a cutting-edge Los Angeles art gallery from April 18 through May 19. Before I Am 8-Bit debuted last spring, its vision was an unproven experiment, a daring collection of new art that treated the '80s video games as a subject worth exploring in a gallery. It was a major success, with an estimated 5,000 people visiting Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight, many of them in LA for E3. And, if cash, however crassly, can be considered a measure of success, I Am 8-Bit did extremely well for such an experimental exhibit—some pieces raked in several thousand dollars each.

Jon Gibson, the 23-year-old founder of I Am 8-Bit, has bigger plans for this year's exhibit. He and the gallery's owners, Katie Cromwell and Jensen Karp, have extended their search for artists far beyond LA this year. They found talent attuned to the I Am 8-Bit vision from Japan, Europe, and other corners of the globe.

Given the way Gibson talks about '80s gaming, he must find it a breeze to lure in all the right artists—and to scare the nonbelievers away. He's got serious love for the '80s gaming icons, and I Am 8-Bit is his tribute to them. "They kept us company," Gibson says in one of his typically passionate rants. "They entertained us on rainy days, they let us escape, and after they kissed us goodnight, they'd occupy our dreams until we woke up in the



"Our Lady of the Arcade" by Misha

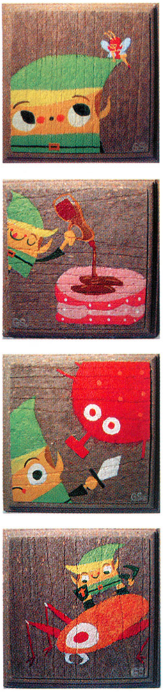


"The Last Hoorah" by Ryan Bubnis

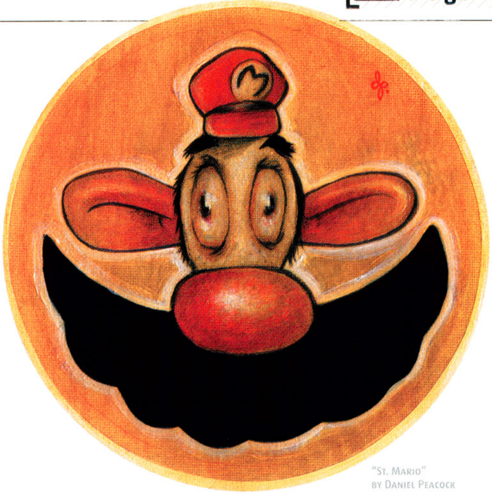
morning." Sound crazy to you? Every Nintendo fan feels the same way. It's just that Gibson feels it a little more poetically. "When life gets boring, I imagine a Goomba riding the subway or Mega Man in the carpool lane with Chun-Li riding passenger. And since I'm a 'What If?' guy, that's one reason why I Am 8-Bit is so exciting to me: It's all these artists wondering, 'What if Bowser . . ." or "What if Dig Dug . . ."

Gibson recalls that although Mario was the most popular subject last year, each Mario was vastly different. "It's all about reinterpreting memories," he opines. "The reason why 100 artists will always paint Mario, Mega Man, or Q*bert differently is that these characters didn't have voices or personalities like they do today. They were mere pawns for button-mashing. It was almost as if your personality was their personality. So when you look at each piece, it's like a crystal ball into the childhood of that artist, be it happy, sad, morbid, or freaky."

This year, as Gibson and the Gallery Nineteen Eighty Eight crew pull in artwork, Gibson sees Mario and Link again emerging as major themes, like in the magnificently bizarre works by 8-Bit newcomer Yosuke Ueno, a Japanese artist who, after falling out of touch with

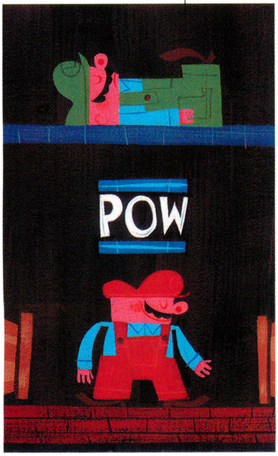


"Fairy Hat"
"I Like-Like Pancakes"
"Oktorok 'n' Roll"
"Tektite Hitchhike"
by Gabe Swarr

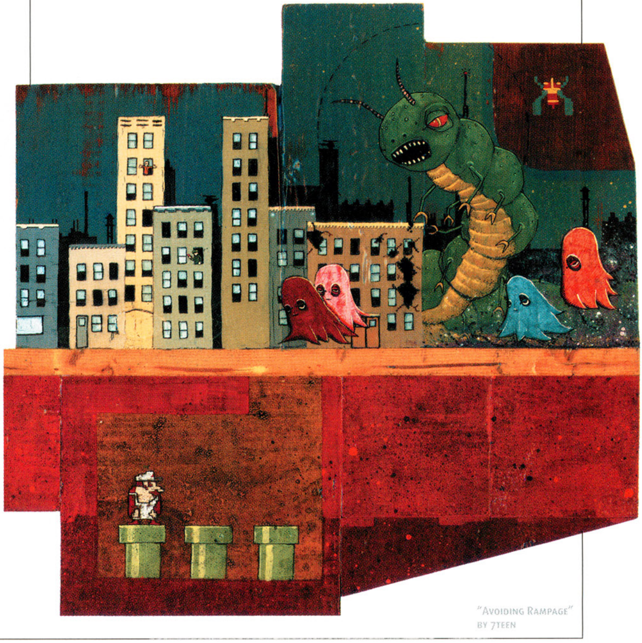


"St. Mario"
by Daniel Peacock

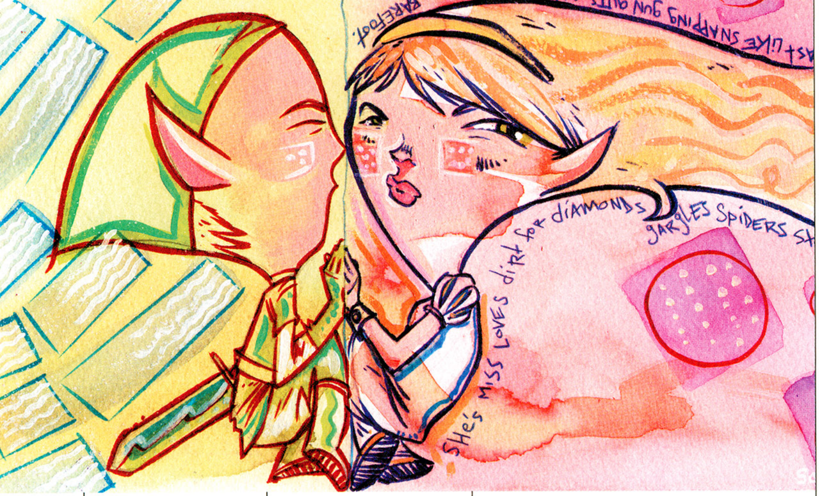
> "When life gets boring, I imagine a Goomba riding the subway . . ."
> —Jon Gibson, I Am 8-Bit founder



"1-Player Again" by Amanda Visell



"Avoiding Rampage"
by 7teen


BAREFOOT.
ast LIKE SNAPPING gun guts
SHe's MISS LOVES dirt for diAMONDS
gargles SPIDERS st

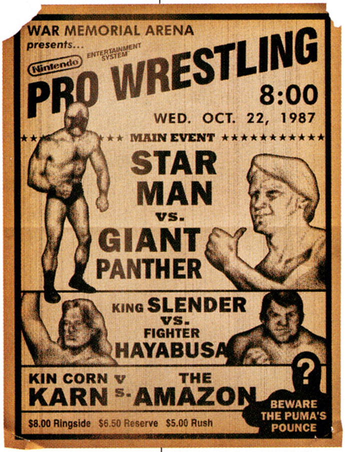
Detail from "Zelda" by Dave Crosland

Gibson after last year's show, appeared in the gallery out of nowhere in March with two paintings in hand, claiming that he was in LA only for the weekend—and that he'd just painted them in his hotel room. That rivals even Gibson's crazy devotion to '80s gaming. Ueno's untitled Mario painting seen on page 48, was driven also by love for the Famicom, where Mario made his console debut in the artist's home country.

Given that many years have passed since '80s icons made their debuts, some of last year's 8-Bit artists portrayed characters coping with the ravages of time. One of the most notorious pieces from 2005 was Greg Simkins' "Pac-Man in Hospice," which showed a geriatric Pac-Man fighting valiantly from a wheelchair. This year, artist Ryan Bubnis continues the veteran theme he started with Link last year. "The Legend of Zelda has always been one of my favorite games, but the thing is, no matter how hard I tried, I never beat Ganon," confesses Bubnis. In '05, he depicted Link as a grey-bearded hero tormented by his failure to save Zelda. This year, Bubnis continues his personal tale in "The Lost Hoorah": "Link is visited by a fairy that tells him that after all his years of mourning, it's time to avenge Zelda's death . . . and sets out to face Ganon one last time."

For Nintendo fans, perhaps no one stole last year's show more than Gabe Swarr, whose squat stylings nailed the

> **"It's like a crystal ball into the childhood of that artist . . ."**
>
> —Jon Gibson, I Am 8-Bit founder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presents...
Nintendo ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM
PRO WRESTLING
8:00
WED. OCT. 22, 1987
MAIN EVENT
STAR MAN
vs.
GIANT PANTHER
KING SLENDER
vs.
FIGHTER HAYABUSA
KIN CORN KARN
vs.
THE AMAZON
?
BEWARE THE PUMA'S POUNCE
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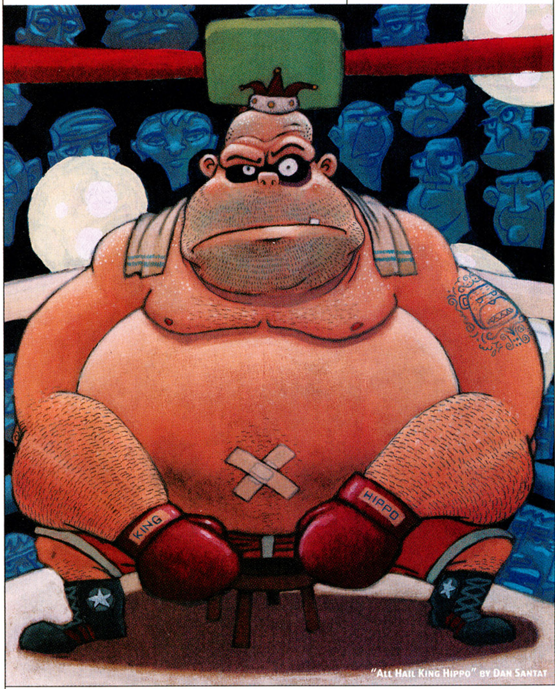
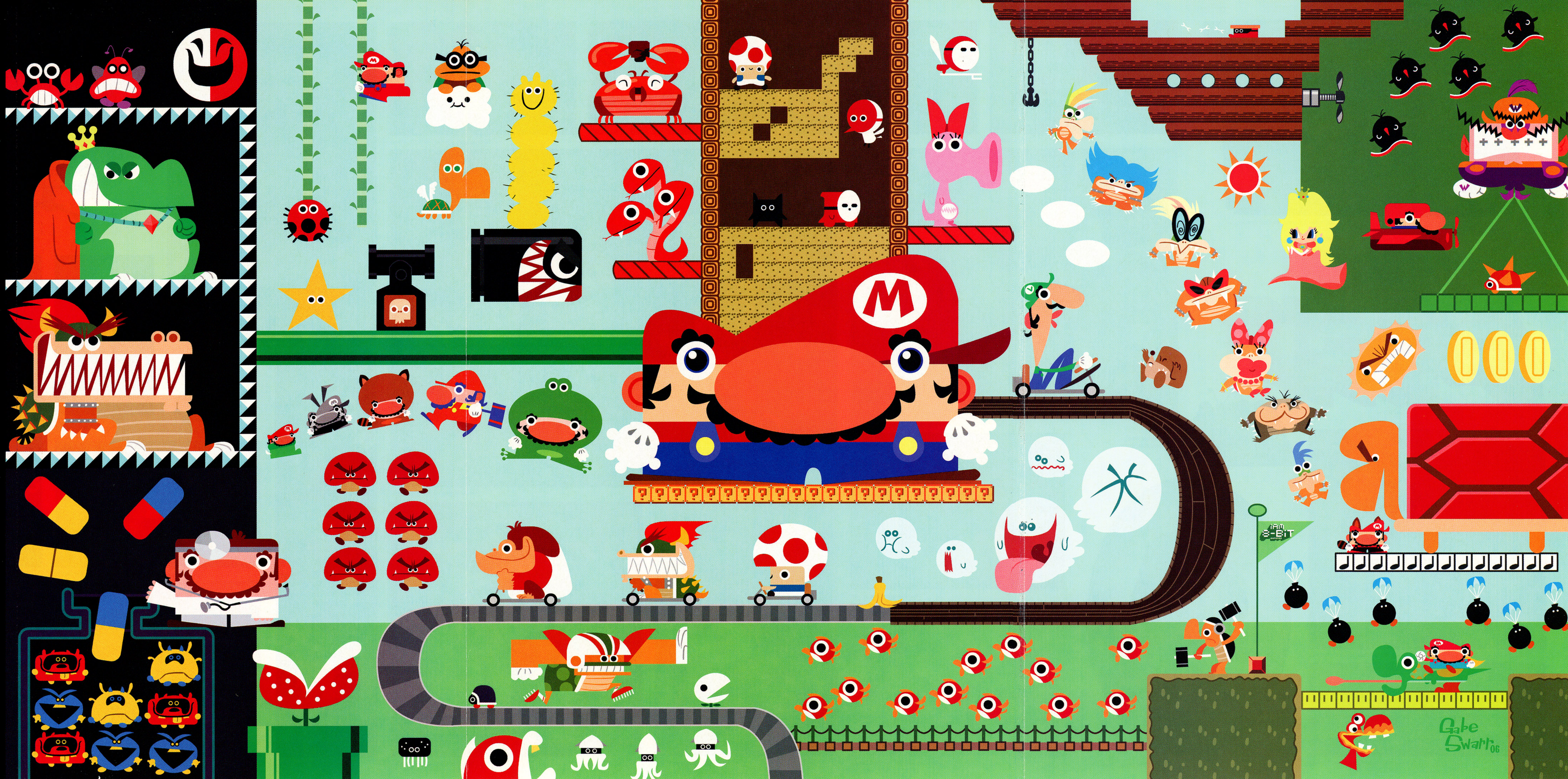
"Starman vs. Giant Panther" by Jim Rugg



"All Hail King Hippo" by Dan Santat

NINTENDO POWER


M
I AM 8-BIT
Gabe Swarr 06

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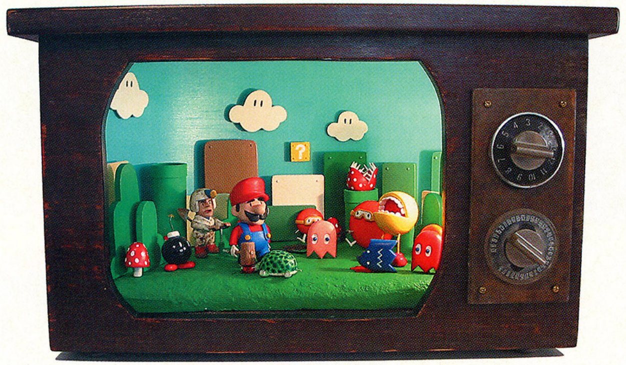
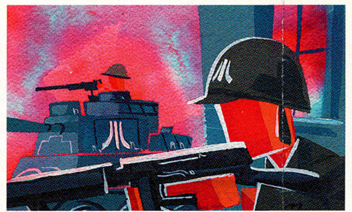
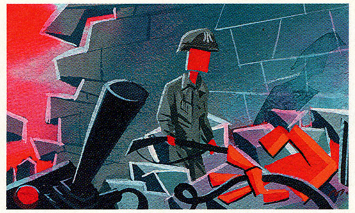
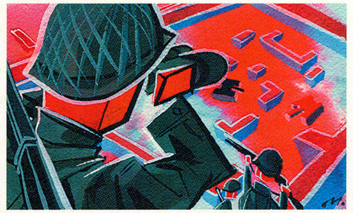
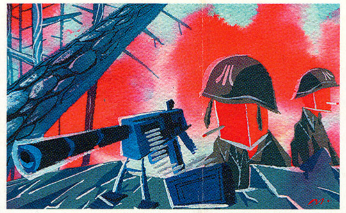

"The Dynamic Trinity" by Matt Burlingame

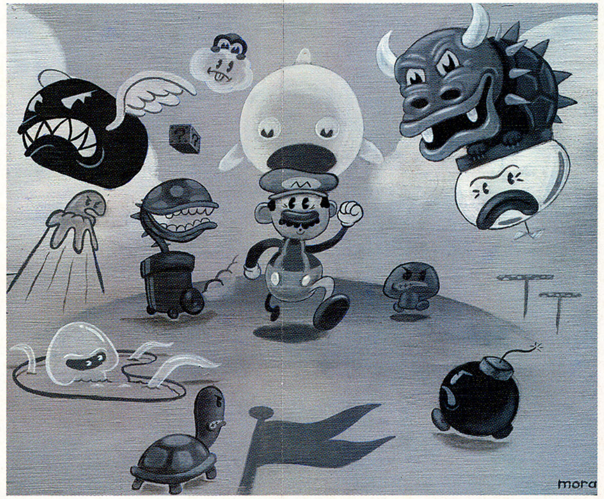
I AM 8-BIT™

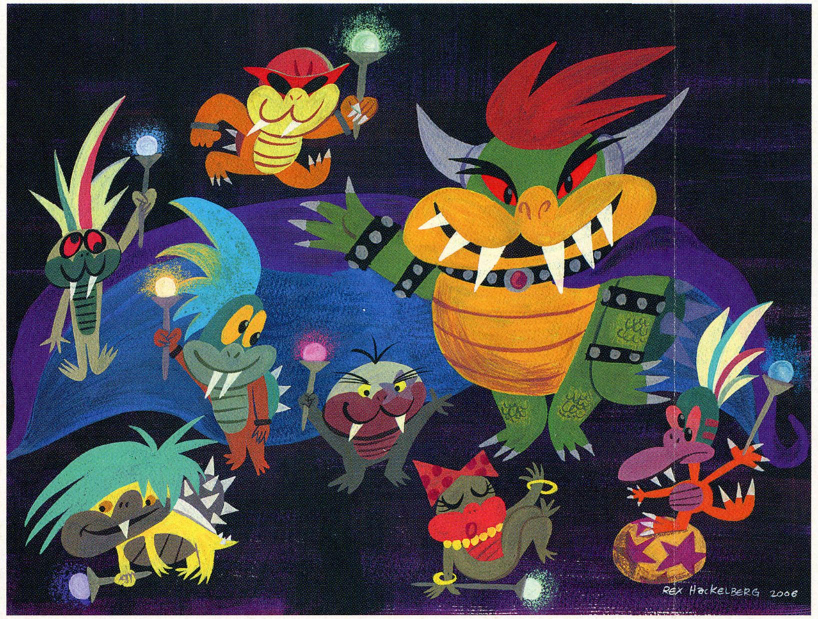

"Able Advances"

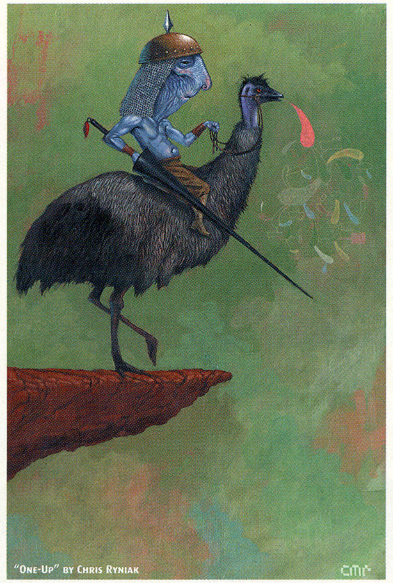

"Game Over"

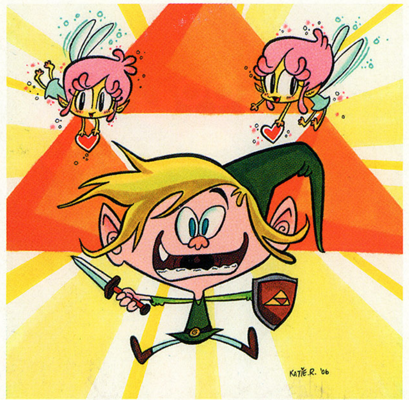

"Bringing in Bravo"

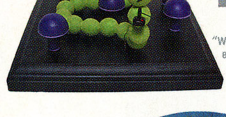

"Charlie Takes a Break" by Scott Morse

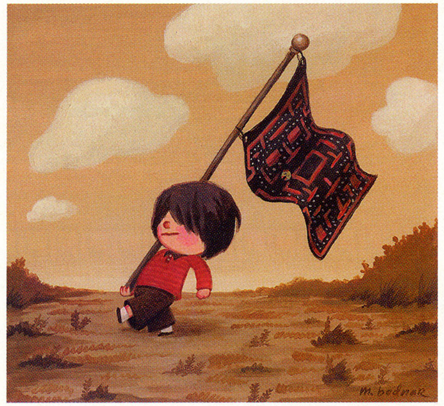

"Back to the Fleischer" by Tony Mora

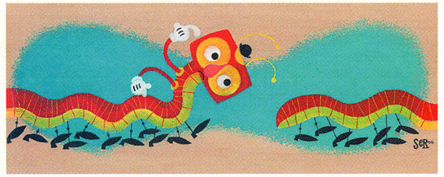

"Koopa Royale" by Rex Hackelberg

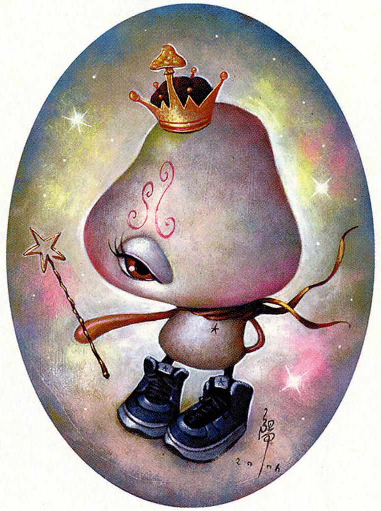

"One-Up" by Chris Ryniak

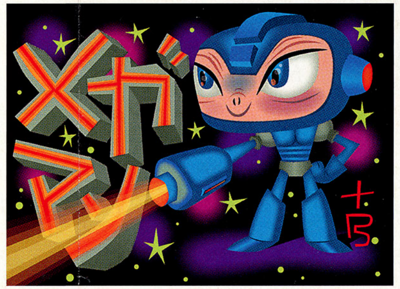

"Life for Link" by Katie Rice


"Who's Playing Who" by Michelle Valigura

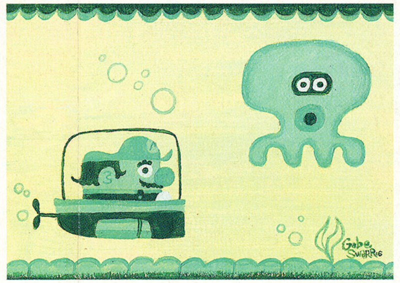

"And I'll Do It Again" by Mark Bodnar

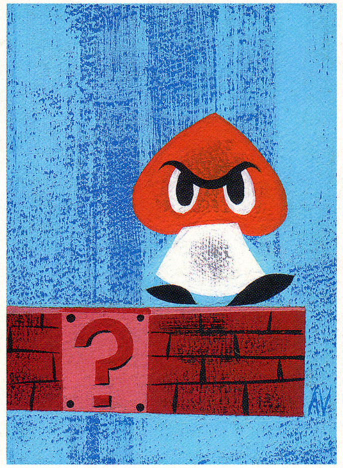

"Confused Millipede" by Sandra Equihua

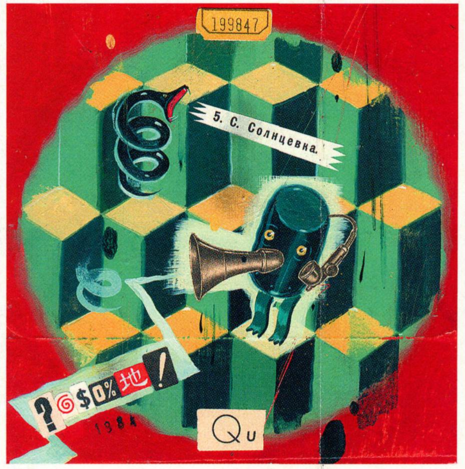

"Untitled" by Yosuke Ueno



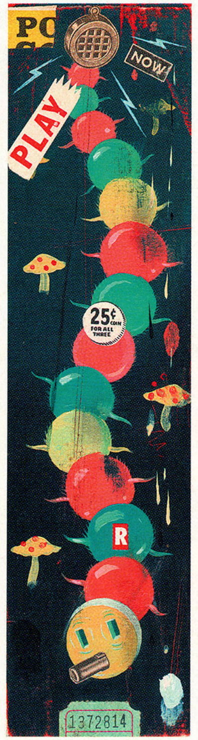
"Mega Man" by Tim Biskup


"Mario Land and Sea" by Gabe Swarr

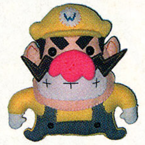

"Goomba" by Amanda Visell

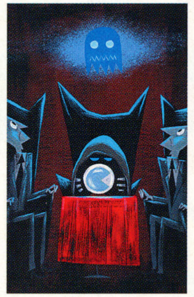


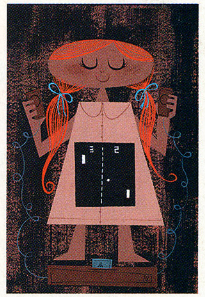
"Q*Bert Cold War" by Ryan Heshka

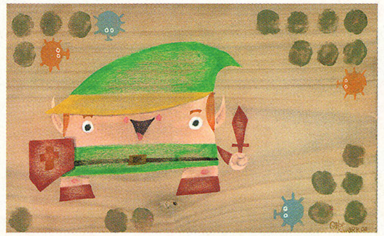


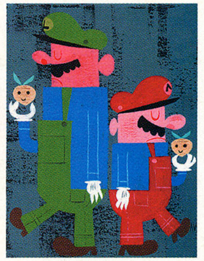
"Centipede" by Ryan Heshka

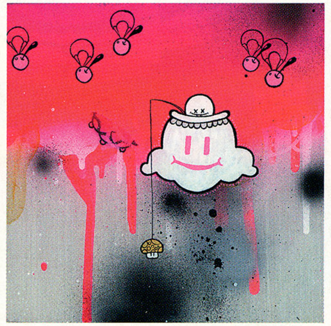

"Wah Wah Wario!!!" by Anna Chambers

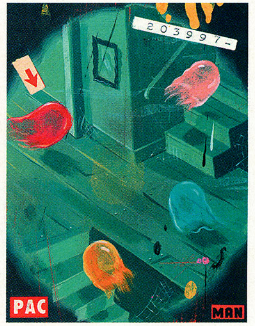

"Raising the Disembodied" by Amanda Visell


"Me vs. Me" by Amanda Visell

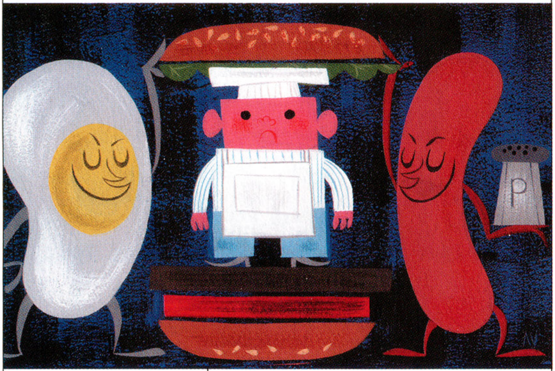

"Antique Link" by Gabe Swarr


"10 Paces" by Amanda Visell

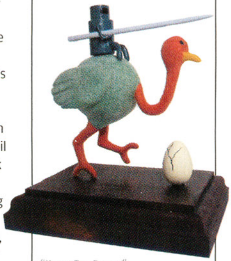

"Happy Gold" by Buff Monster



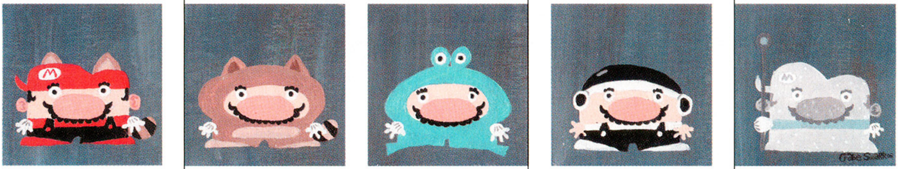
"Ectopacman" by Ryan Heshka



"What Time Is It?" by Amanda Visell



"Know Thy Enemy" by Michelle Valigura



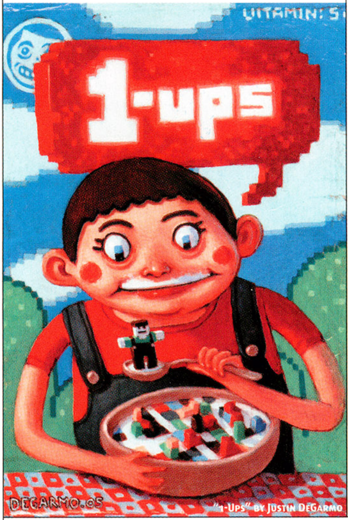
"Mario Power-Ups" - a series by Gabe Swarr

physical comedy, not to mention the blockiness of Mario's pixelated origins. The exhibit almost never saw Nintendo According to Swarr, however. "When Jon Gibson asked me to do a painting," the artist reveals, "my first was a pixel-for-pixel reproduction of the Super Mario Bros. 3 sprite. I wanted to show that we are nothing without that sprite."

But Gibson sent him back to the drawing board after a heated phone discussion in which the curator yelled for a "Gabe Swarr Mario" before hanging up. "That's when I brought everything else to the table," says Swarr. "My influences. My experiences. My breakfast. And that's when it came alive and artistic."

In honor of the 2006 exhibit, which will again host Swarr's works, the artist has created a virtual Mardis Gras of all things Mario for Nintendo Power (your exclusive poster this month), which puts the artist's style and his affection for Nintendo on display. "It's what I want to give back to Miyamoto," says Swarr. "His characters have brought us all years of joy and I feel honored to do this piece for Nintendo Power."

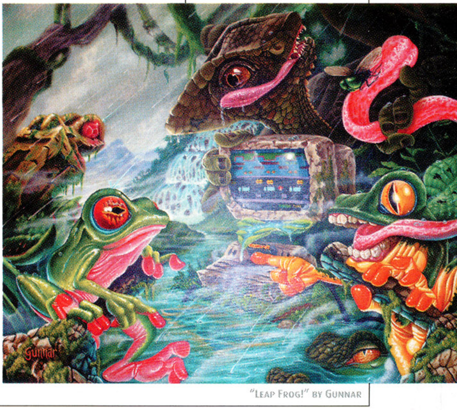
> **"[Miyamoto's] characters have brought us all years of joy . . . ."**
>
> —Gabe Swarr, I Am 8-Bit artist



"1-Ups" by Justin DeGarmo

As Gibson rushed to finalize the exhibit for its April opening, he also looked to the future of I Am 8-Bit, which he envisions as more than an annual event. He's moving his I Am 8-Bit clothing line beyond his website (www.iam8bit.net) to fashion boutiques, he awaits the April release of an I Am 8-Bit book based on last year's exhibit, and he'll soon "do something on a more interactive scale. Take what you will from that, but things are in the works."

Asked whether he foresees an I Am 16-Bit or even an I Am Revolution on the horizon, Gibson predicts what it would mean for artists who focus on Mario & Co. "Nintendo is one of the only companies to stay very true to their roots," he suggests. "They've maintained their icons since before they even had names. No matter how high-tech Nintendo gets, their icons remain. So I Am Revolution would be almost the same thing that you see in I Am 8-Bit. Seriously."



"Leap Frog!" by Gunnar

25 Mama Mia Moments

Not a remake, but an all-new adventure in classic style, New Super Mario Bros. has more than a few surprises that will make you both remember and forget the good old days.

By George Sinfield

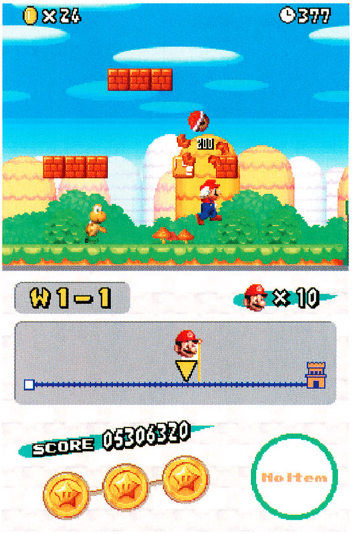
Let's kick some Koopa.

1

Way-Back Track

Hit the bricks in World 1-1.

The first of the game's 80 levels is an instant classic—it's like the original title's opener, but chockablock with new-school touches. The platforms, pipes, Koopas, and Goombas have 3-D weight and depth, and Mario is a retro-perfect vision with fluid motion and intuitive control. If you've played any Super Mario Bros. game, a few seconds with this one will transport you back to your best memories of platforming glory. You don't have to think about the controls—just run, hop, and stomp. With his fist in the air, the red-capped hero will hammer through blocks, collect coins and power-ups, and either flatten his foes or send them flying. The basics haven't changed since Mario first smashed a Goomba in the mid '80s, and why would they? His moves are the most famous and most imitated in gaming—and they've never been smoother than they are in New SMB. It's a big game, but you need not go deep into it to know that side-scrolling Mario is back and better than ever.



Welcome to World 1-1. With the signature Mushroom Kingdom mounds in the background, Mario does his thing on the upper screen while a lower-screen display charts his progress.

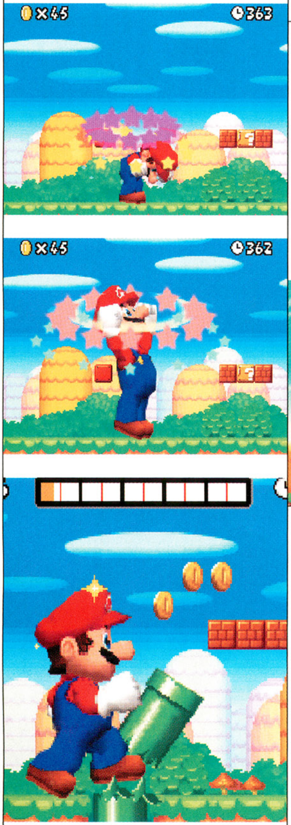
©2006 Nintendo

2

Oh, Grow Up!

Dominate the landscape as giant Mario.

A supersized mushroom gives Mario a sumo-worthy growth spurt, transforming him from diminutive plumber to world-crushing Godzilla. Enemies that would normally cause him harm bounce off of him like ping-pong balls. As the mustachioed monster kicks pipes over and knocks blocks aside, a meter grows at the top of the screen, every notch representing a 1-Up Mushroom that will drop once he shrinks back to normal size.



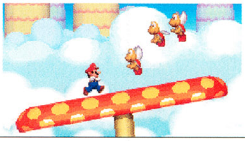
It's always been a big deal when Mario grows to become Super Mario. In New SMB, his growth is even more dramatic.

3

Full Tilt

Keep your balance on turning, shaking, and buckling platforms.

Polka-dotted mushoom tops have always provided a vertical boost, but in New SMB they're alive—rocking and writhing, it seems, to buck Mario off their backs. Your first ride on a twisting toadstool reminds you that you haven't been to this part of the Mushroom Kingdom before.

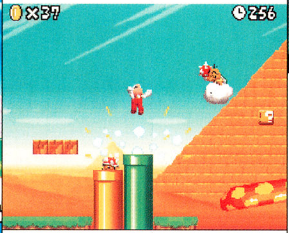


4

Plumbing Pop

Blast off from a cannon pipe.

Mario's never dealt with a plumbing problem like the backed-up pipes in New SMB. Down he goes into a drain, only to be shot back up with rocket speed. Wahoo, indeed.



5

More Marios

Max out on 1-Ups.

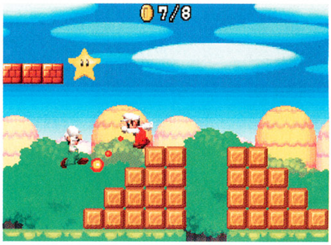
They may be green, but they're as good as gold. When a 1-Up Mushroom pops out of a block, that's one more chance for you to get to the next save point.

6

Sibling Rivalry

Beat your bro to a star in a versus game.

A Mario-vs.-Luigi match allows you to race for stars against other players on any of several custom tracks. When a prize pops up on the radar, you hoof it double time to be the first one to claim it. You can also knock a star out of your bro and scramble for it while he's dazed.



When you tangle with another plumber, your fortunes may turn. You might stomp him and send his stars flying, or he could get the better of you. You can go from star pauper to king, or vice versa, in a few crucial moments.

George's Top Mama Mia Moment

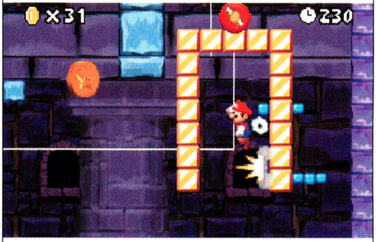
Rolling through World 1, you know that the graphics, with their 3-D edge, are different from those of the classic titles, but the first visit to a castle shows just how brilliant they can be—especially in the showdown with shadowy Bowser.

7

Kick It Freestyle

Wall-Jump to new heights.

Adding the Wall Jump to his side-scrolling repertoire, Mario is able to ascend narrow spaces between walls as long as his timing is right. There's nothing quite like the excitement of pulling off a string of Wall Jumps to reach a level-topping item or ledge.



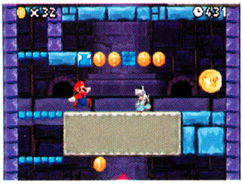
Sustaining a series of Wall Jumps in a World 2 tower mechanism leads you to a shiny Star Coin.

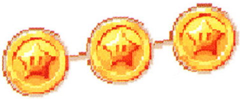
8

Star Power

Collect an out-of-the-way Star Coin.

A New Super Mario Bros. level is a complex, nook-and-cranny-filled thing of beauty. By going off the beaten path, you'll uncover Star Coins, which are currency in the Mushroom Kingdom. After you grab one, you'll feel the urge to collect them all.





Three Star Coins per level fill spaces on the lower screen. You'll use them to open paths to item houses.

Steve T.'s Top Mama Mia Moment

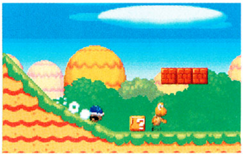
I'm a sucker for nostalgia, so simply stomping a Goomba for the first time in over a decade makes me feel all warm and fuzzy inside. I also get a perverse kick out of crushing Mario with giant Luigi.

9

Shell Shock

Bounce off bricks in a Koopa shell.

What do you get when you cross a plumber with a Koopa? It's-a Mario with a shell on his back and the power to crash into enemies and blocks without getting hurt. It takes practice to perfect shell skittering, but once you're moving, there'll be no stopping you.

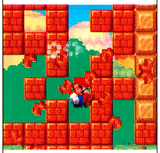


10

Super Smash Bros.

Break blocks with a backside bash.

Mario's got moxy. By pressing the jump button and down on the Control Pad in midjump, you can send him into a block-smashing Ground Pound.



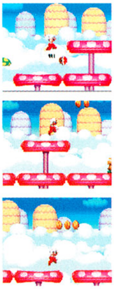
The Ground Pound destroys structures from the top, down.

11

On the Rebound

Take a tour on trampoline platforms.

Out of control and flying high, Mario bounds over gaps on a line of polka-dot trampolines.



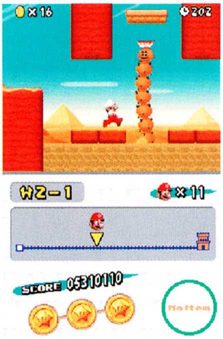
Sometimes you can let go of the controller and let your momentum take over.

12

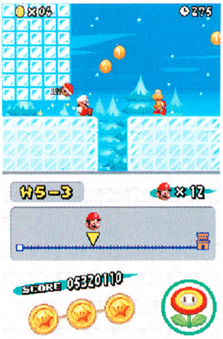
Planet Mario

Explore 80 levels in eight huge worlds.

After you've defeated a world-ending boss, there's a moment of anticipation when you just can't wait to see where the game will take you next. Will it be an ice world, desert, or jungle? Who knows? The game offers eight different terrain types, all new takes on classic Super Mario world themes.



What's a Mario game without a desert world? If you're not careful, the plucky plumber will end up in a sinkhole.



When the weather turns cold in the Mushroom Kingdom, surfaces get slippery. Watch for abrupt edges.

13

Great Googly Goomba

Face off against a monster mushroom.

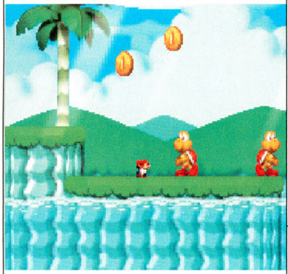
It's big—really big—brown, and pretty mean-looking with its furrowed brow, but you can't help but feel giddy when you see the mightiest Goomba of them all ruling over the World 4 castle. After all these years of squashing the critters, you're face-to-face with one that could mash you.

14

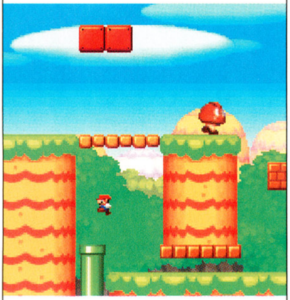
Minish Mario

Be like Link, and shrink.

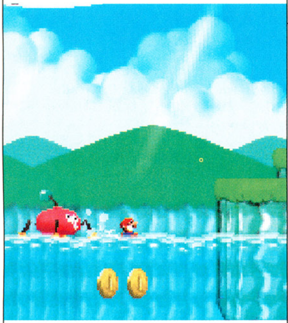
A small blue mushroom downsizes Mario to gnat-like proportions. His small stature makes him light, but his jumping ability remains strong, which means you'll be able to leap high and gain major hang time. A normal hop and stomp won't smash an enemy (you'll bounce), but a concentrated Ground Pound will do the trick. Narrow pipes and gaps are built specifically for the littlest hero.



As tiny Mario, you're a very small target, making it easy to get around regular-sized enemies.



Who could possibly fit in that microscopic pipe? Mini Mario can go places no other hero can.



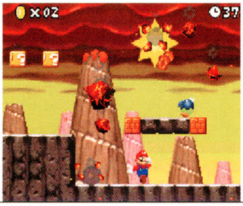
When the small version of Mario—nearly light as air—picks up steam, he can run on the surface of water.

15

Beware of Rocks

Dodge platform-busting balls of lava.

What's a run to Bowser's place without a little lava? In World 8-8, the hot stuff is rock-solid and raining down with block-breaking power. It's not enough that you've got enemies to contend with. Now the elements are conspiring against you, too.

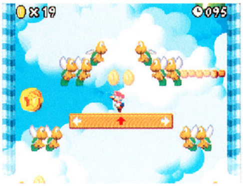


16

Air Scare

Steer a platform through a cloud of Koopa Paratroopas.

Super Mario Bros. games are filled with platforms that slide up, down, and sideways. In World 7-2, a platform moves according to your will—and you've got to navigate it through a turtle platoon.

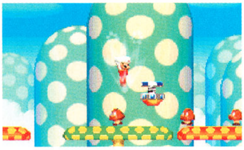


17

What Goes Up . . .

Drop with force after a spinning flight.

Whirlwinds and whirling platforms shoot Mario into the air. When you press down on the Control Pad, he'll make a beeline back to earth with pulverizing power.

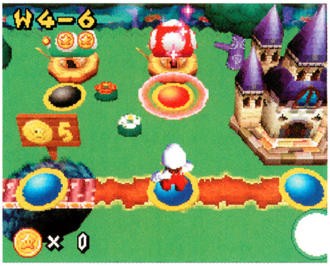


18

Up with Power-Ups

Unlock paths to item houses.

Since the beginning, the Mushroom and Fire Flower have been essential to Mario's survival, but finding them at the right time was tricky. New SMB lets Mario keep a power-up in his back pocket. Power-ups are located in item houses; by shelling out Star Coins, Mario can gain access to them.



Five Star Coins will get you passage to an item house and the opportunity to collect a power-up for midlevel use.

Chris H.'s Top Mama Mia Moment

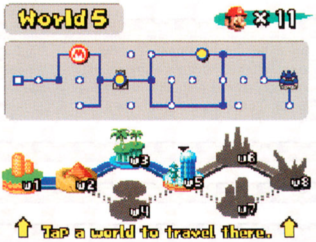
One of my favorite tricks in the original SMB is to jump and rebound off a wall in World 1-2, so I was blown away to discover that a true Wall Jumping mechanic was added to New SMB. It's a great new trick that opens up nearly limitless possibilities.

19

One-Touch Travel

Visit other worlds via the touch screen.

Victory in a castle sends you to another world. You may want to return to a previous locale to try your luck at reaching an alternate exit or a hard-to-get Star Coin. Between levels, a flow chart on the touch screen displays every unlocked world. Tap the world you wish to enter—you'll be transported there.

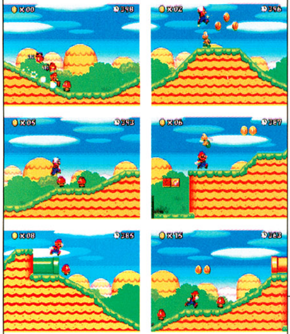


20

Nonstop Flight

Keep your thumb on the sprint button.

You don't have to succeed to have fun in New SMB. If you've got lives to spare, you'll like the challenge of trying to zip through levels at a dead run—just sprinting and jumping. The experience will give you a new appreciation for the game's level design.



The ultimate challenge: Memorize a level, then run through it as quickly as you can.

Pete's Top Mama Mia Moment

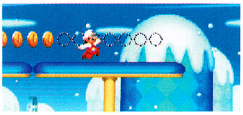
After playing the game I've realized that the quickest way to a man's heart is through his ear. NSMB has many of the classic sounds you remember from the past, and when you hear 'em they'll bring tears to your eyes.

21

Backup Bucks

Reveal invisible coins.

As you speed through an area, you may notice empty dotted outlines. If you come into contact with the curious shapes, they will turn into coins after you pass. If you're in need of cash, back up and grab the moolah. The sound of dozens of coins dropping into your reserve will be music to your ears.

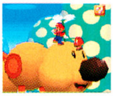


22

Bumpy Ride

Battle bad guys on the back of a giant Wiggler.

The SMB version of a fight on top of a train, World 7-2 takes place on a huge sectional insect, whose parts pop up without warning.



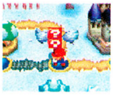
While riding on one huge creature, you'll jump for the backsides of other beasts to keep them from clobbering you.

23

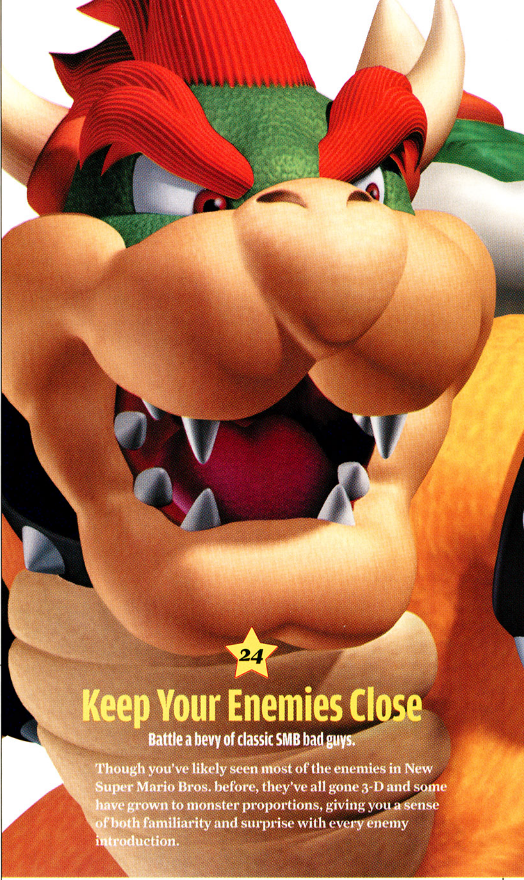
Map Quest

Find extra challenges and items on the overview.

Hammer Bros. and item boxes hover over dots on the map. Select one to have a level-starting encounter.



A hovering box means a treat will fly through when the level begins.



24

Keep Your Enemies Close

Battle a bevy of classic SMB bad guys.

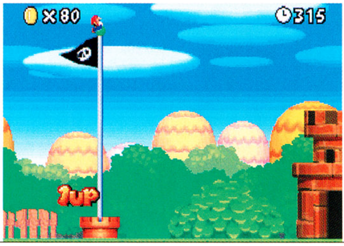
Though you've likely seen most of the enemies in New Super Mario Bros. before, they've all gone 3-D and some have grown to monster proportions, giving you a sense of both familiarity and surprise with every enemy introduction.

25

Top This

Grab the tip top of a level-ending flagpole to earn a 1-Up.

The higher you hit the flagpole at the end of a level (towers and castles excluded), the more points you'll earn. If you hit the knob (or fly over the flag), you'll be granted a 1-Up. Each level offers a different layout of bricks, platforms, and enemies to help you get a boost to the top.



If you're able to reach the end of a level as miniaturized Mario, chances are that you'll earn a 1-Up by using the little guy's superior jumping ability.

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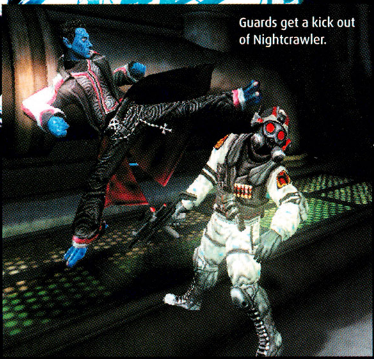
X-ING OVER

Tying together the *X2* and *X-Men: The Last Stand* movies, **X-Men: The Official Game** is a multimedia crossover like few that have come before. NP went behind the scenes to interview the game's creative forces.

By Chris Hoffman



Guards get a kick out of Nightcrawler.

PRODUCTS RANGE FROM EVERYONE 10+ TO TEEN
E-T 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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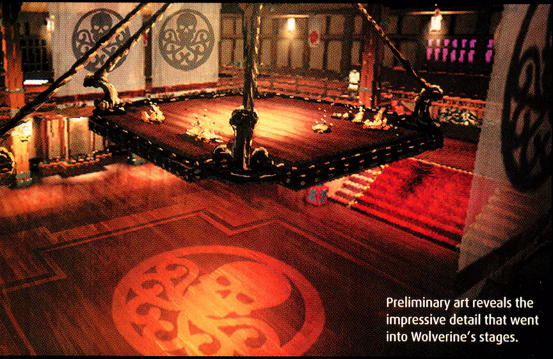
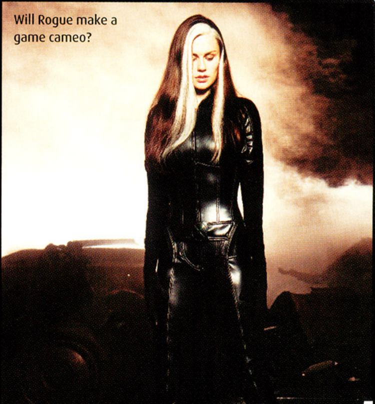
X-Men: The Official Game provides three distinct experiences across Nintendo's three systems. While the GCN version focuses on three main characters—Wolverine, Nightcrawler, and Iceman—with divergent play styles (vicious all-out brawling, agility mixed with combat, and aerial-based shooting, respectively), the DS title offers top-down adventure, and the GBA version boasts more-traditional side-scrolling action. But there's more to making the quintessential X-Men game than just gameplay. For decades, the X-Men have also been known for great stories, unforgettable characters, fantastic visuals, and a believable world; to ensure that the game lived up to those standards, the developers worked closely with the minds behind the movies and comic books, and enlisted the talent of the films' actors, including Hugh Jackman as Wolverine and Alan Cumming as Nightcrawler, for voiceovers in the game. Read on to discover how Activision harnessed these elements to create what could be the definitive X-Men video game.

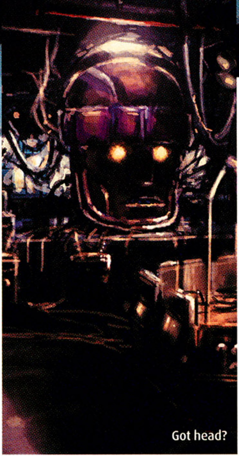


Preliminary art reveals the impressive detail that went into Wolverine's stages.



Will Rogue make a game cameo?

Lady Deathstrike: not as dead as once thought.


Got head?

Might Makes Write

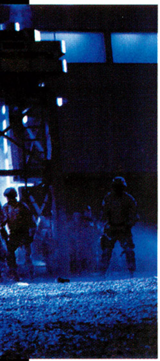
To tell the tale of X-Men: The Official Game, Activision enlisted two of the writers who know the X-Men best: Chris Claremont, the legendary X-Men scribe who's written some of the mutants' most revered stories, and Zak Penn, cowriter of the *X2* and *X-Men: The Last Stand* films. Claremont wrote the game's initial treatment before handing it over to Penn, who adapted the story to make it mesh with the continuity of the movies. NP recently had the chance to speak with Penn—who's also known for writing games like Fantastic Four and movie scripts such as *Elektra* and *Incident at Loch Ness*—to discuss all things X-Men.

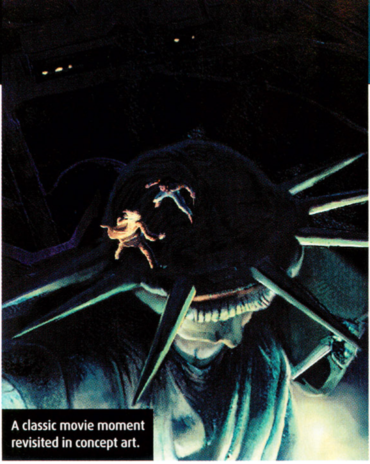
Nintendo Power: First, could you explain a bit about how you first got interested in X-Men? How long have you been a fan, and how did you become involved with the movies and games?

Zak Penn: When I was a kid, I read the Claremont run—the famous #94 to #150, the Dark Phoenix Saga—and it was probably the comic book that meant the most to me as a kid. It's really what sparked my interest in science fiction, comic books, etc. So when I came to Hollywood and became a screenwriter, one of the first things I tried to get a job on was *X-Men*. I went in for a rewrite at one point, but they ended up sticking with David [Hayter] or whoever was writing it, and when it came around to *X2*, they asked me to write it. It was kind of a dream come true for me, particularly writing this movie [*X-Men: The Last Stand*], which goes back so much to the original source material.

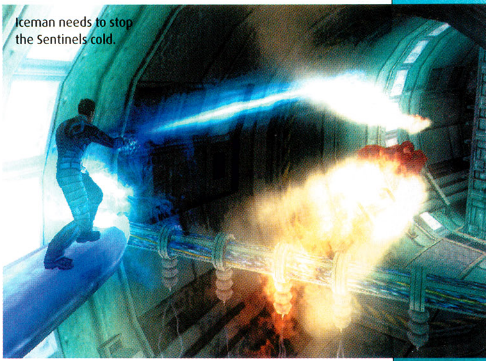
NP: How did the process of meshing the storyline with the continuity of the movies work?

ZP: The key is that Fox was really tight with the script, so [Claremont] hadn't really gotten a chance to read the whole thing. But number one, I tried to fix it up and tell him, "Oh look; here's what we're doing with this character. Maybe you shouldn't do that here." And we tried to cover why Nightcrawler wasn't in the movie, which was really for technical reasons. It wasn't really a creative choice as much as it was a production choice not to have Nightcrawler in the third movie. So when I heard that Alan [Cumming, the actor who played Nightcrawler] was actually going to do the voiceover for the video game, I said, "Hey, let's do a lot of Nightcrawler stuff that will at least continue his story from *X2*." So there's a bunch of things like that, and then trying to sync up the reality of the film at the beginning of *X-Men: The Last Stand* with what actually happened in *X2*. And there was also a lot of dialog. Since I had written on two X-Men movies, I had a pretty good sense of how the characters talked and how those actors talked. It's a very unusual thing, since Chris Claremont made up a lot of these characters. To a certain extent, they're his creations. But then the actors interpret those creations and turn them into the movie-world characters, so now there's this kind of ironic thing that the guy who actually created the characters writes them the way they were meant to be written in the comic book, and so I was trying to help him write it more to the voices of the actors since they were going to be the ones doing the voiceovers. It was strange. Kind of a weird circularity to it.





A classic movie moment revisited in concept art.



Iceman needs to stop the Sentinels cold.

NP: How would you describe, from a character-development standpoint, the journeys that each of the three main characters are going on in the game?
ZP: Certainly, with Nightcrawler, it was trying to get him to a point where you understood why he was no longer in the X-Men at the end of the video game. That was important to me. With Bobby—Iceman—most of the focus is on his relationship with Pyro. That's the one carry-through.

NP: What about Wolverine? Why is he going on his journey to Japan to fight old enemies?
ZP: Well, here's the thing: The video game has a lot more opportunities to explore the world and the characters as they exist in the comic book, so Wolverine going to Japan, for example, is an opportunity to do some stuff that all the comic-book fans know, but that we'd never have time for in a movie. One of the things about the X-Men movies is you don't have time for anything except the main plot. I wrote a scene for Storm in *X2* and for Scott and Jean in *X2*, and they never saw the light of day, and they were pure character scenes and off-plot, and you have so many characters to deal with that you very rarely have those opportunities. When you get into video games, suddenly you can start going into all their back stories and follow the Weapon X storyline and introduce all sorts of other characters that pop out of Logan's past. Those were choices that Claremont made that I was glad about because you're much more hemmed in when you're making the movie.

NP: I was wondering if any of the other characters like Cyclops or Rogue made it into the game.
ZP: There are cameos in the game, yes. Storm. I believe Kitty is in one of the cut-scenes. Colossus is in there. Of course Magneto.

NP: Speaking of which, in the DS version of the game, Magneto's a playable character and he's teaming up with the X-Men, even though he turned his back on them in the second movie. How did we arrive at this plot twist?
ZP: Here's the thing: a common enemy rears its head again and Magneto and the X-Men are unwillingly, reluctantly forced to fight on the same side.

NP: And I guess one of the enemies they're fighting in all three versions is the Sentinels.
ZP: That's another example of something . . . that there's a lot more opportunity for in the video game than there is in the movie. The over-arching story is that the X-Men return to Alkali Lake because there's a sense that there's some sort of disturbance there. And when they get there, they find that, in fact, whatever had gone on down there, whatever Stryker had been doing wasn't completely destroyed by the water rushing over and the dam collapsing. And what they basically uncover over the course of the game is the actual Sentinel program. Which, incidentally, I had tried to write in to *X2*, and it just got cut for other reasons. Originally [Stryker] was going to have a whole bunch of Sentinels down there. And then [in the game] they kind of follow that plot around the world.

NP: Is there a main overall villain who's manipulating the Sentinels?
ZP: Yes, there is. There is a twist, I believe. I don't want to give away who it ultimately is, but the X-Men believe that the program has been restarted, and then there's a reveal as to who actually has restarted it. It seems to me wrong to give it away.

NP: Did you or Chris ever discuss including Gambit in the game, since there were rumors of him appearing in the third movie?
ZP: Well, we had talked about it. Now that the secret's out that he's not in the movie, it's funny, because there's so much Internet stuff about Gambit. It's crazy how many people ask me about Gambit online. "Why isn't Gambit in the movie? Why isn't Gambit in the movie?" The thing is that people are so rabid about Gambit that you don't want to introduce him in a way that doesn't do justice to his story. We couldn't fit him into the movie. We just couldn't. Like, we couldn't do the things we needed to do and wanted to do and we couldn't honor the characters that were already there and also find a way to make Gambit part of the story. At the beginning, we really tried to work Gambit in, and it felt off-plot. So when that happened, once Gambit was out, it seemed like it would almost be annoying to fans to introduce him in the video game. At least that was my take on it. I'd be even more frustrated as a fan if Gambit was in the video game and then not in the movie, and no mention of him. I think we're leaving Gambit for a future installment.

> **"The video game has a lot more opportunities to explore the world and the characters as they exist in the comic book..."**

NP: Did you get the chance to debut any of the new *Last Stand* characters in the game?
ZP: Multiple Man is a great example. Multiple Man's in the movie, and he has a pretty fun little part. And when I read Chris's outline, I said, "Oh, cool!" With Multiple Man, when I saw what Chris had done, he had this really clever scene with Multiple Man kind of already part of the Brotherhood. Without going into too much detail, I wanted to change that, so we changed that so that his actions were separate from the rest. Basically, we changed that to make it fit in more with what you'll see in *X-Men: The Last Stand*.

NP: Are there any other elements in the movie that will have more significance for people who've played the game first?
ZP: There are things in the game that are nods to things that happen in the movie. [We included the] Danger Room. And there is one specific instance (but I don't want to give it away) that plays into the end of the video game.

An Optic Blast

Just as important as X-Men: The Official Game's story is its look. Activision's goal was to re-create the aesthetic of the movies in interactive form, and let players view that universe through the X-Men's eyes. Producer (and die-hard X-Men fan) Todd "TQ" Jefferson of Activision worked closely with the creative team as they determined the game's visual design. Here's what he had to say about graphically immersing players in the world of the X-Men.

Nintendo Power: How did you balance the movie look with comic-book elements when creating the visual design for the game, especially when bringing in nonmovie characters and locations? Can you explain how certain characters changed or evolved?
Todd "TQ" Jefferson: Well, the films are cast incredibly well, so there's not much difference between the appearance of say, Iceman in the movie versus Iceman (non-iced over) in the comics. In order to walk the fine line between film and comic, we maintained a strong communication flow with both Marvel and Fox. Our goal was twofold: ensure we preserve the look and feel of the movie while still paying appropriate homage to the X-Men's comic-book origins. The best example of this would be Silver Samurai, a classic Marvel villain and long-standing rival of Wolverine. Our numerous designs were submitted to Marvel and Fox as we attempted to translate the character's look for the game. In the end we have a very believable, very menacing Silver Samurai that is instantly recognizable to fans that know him, and hard to forget for the newly acquainted.

NP: How much support did you get from the movie-production team? Did you get to visit the sets, or see preproduction assets, etc.?
TQ: Production on both ends was fast, so we didn't visit the set often. We were granted unprecedented access to production art, schematics, blueprints, etc. from the movie. We also took full advantage of previous set visits that took place for the first and second X-Men films. More so than any other production, this game takes full advantage of Activision's long-standing relationships with both Marvel and Fox to bring the movie world to the small screen.

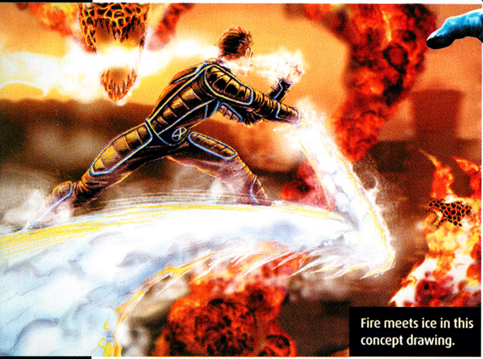
NP: What is the design process like when creating a character or an environment?
TQ: Everything starts with the question "What if?" "What if Iceman fought a hundred-foot serpent made of fire? What if Nightcrawler had to fight two Sentinels? What if Wolverine had to fight inside a tornado?" From there we cull out the good ideas and start putting them down on paper. The strongest of these realizations goes to Marvel and Fox to get their feedback. Adjustments are made and the process continues. Eventually these ideas are built and tried in a test area not entirely unlike the X-Men's Danger Room. Again Marvel and Fox are involved in the feedback loop. Here we make more adjustments to animations, size, shape, etc. This rough process of building and tweaking, building and tweaking continues for all the characters, objects and levels you see throughout the game.

NP: What was it like revisiting locales from previous X-Men films? What did you do to bring authenticity and interest to these familiar areas?
TQ: Essentially, we built these locations from scratch with an eye for fitting it to whatever character was selected for that level. That is, we asked ourselves questions like, "What would Nightcrawler see if he were in the generator room of Alkali Lake?" His perspective is going to be heavily influenced by his abilities not just as a teleporter, but as an acrobat that can briefly stick to walls. He's looking for clear lines of sight, outcroppings, overhanging handholds, and smooth surfaces. Constantly shifting our perspective like this allowed us to see old locations in new ways, creating new, imaginative, and entertaining gameplay along the way.

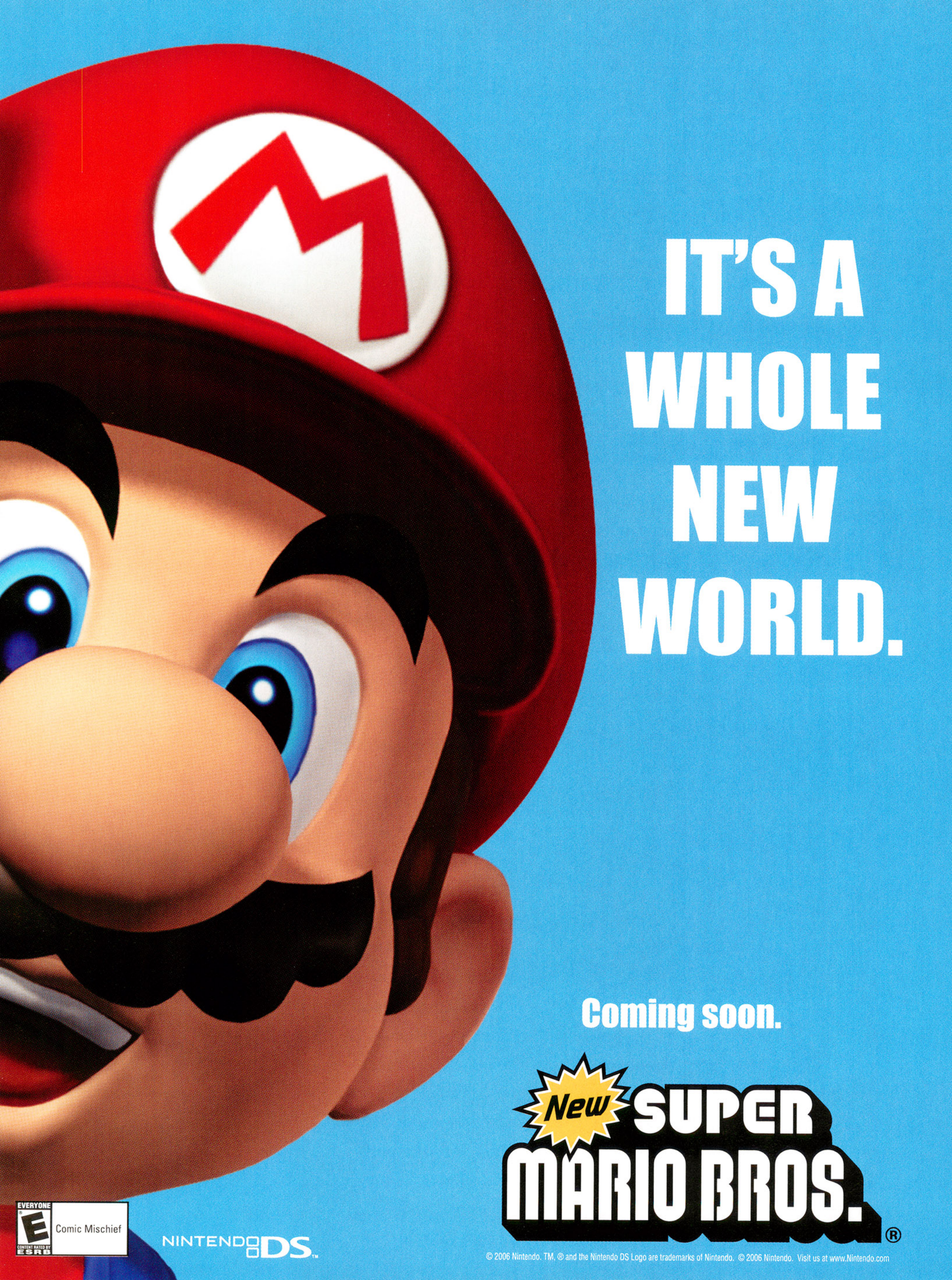
> **"Our goal was twofold: ensure we preserve the look and feel of the movie while still paying appropriate homage to the X-Men's comic-book origins."**

NP: What sorts of visual elements would you like people to notice while they're playing the game?
TQ: The game does have its big set pieces, like the Brooklyn Bridge, fire serpent, and Lady Liberty, but there are also a thousand smaller things that all work to bring the game to life. Nightcrawler's "bamf" effect, the shear off of Iceman's slide when he turns, and Wolverine, who looks exactly like Hugh Jackman, all serve to create a gameplay experience with as much impact as the movies themselves.

Want to know even more about the making of X-Men: The Official Game? The GCN version features a wealth of bonus material, including developer interviews, trailers, and concept art. Look for it and the DS and GBA versions, when the game hits in May.



Fire meets ice in this concept drawing.



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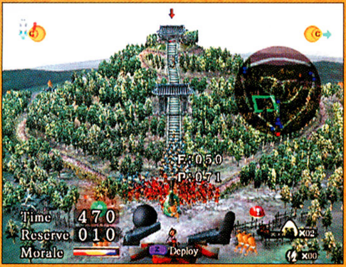
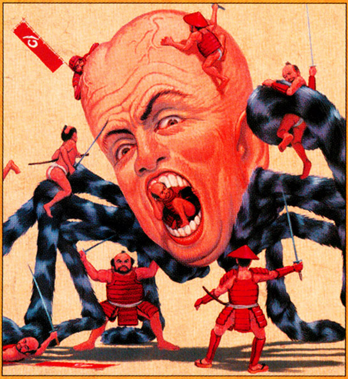
ODAMA CREATOR TELLS ALL

After getting the scoop from **Yoot Saito**, we're full of shock and awe, not only for his new game, but also his master plan: to blast apart the very foundation of gaming.

By Steven Grimm

EVERYONE 10+ E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB





When Yoot Saito's Odama was revealed at E3 2004, gamers bowed before the idea of medieval pinball, a rare gift from one of the most out-there minds in gaming. Saito gained his big rep with SimTower in 1995 (now on the GBA as The Tower SP), then earned mad-genius status in 2000 with his man-fish life sim, Seaman. Odama gained momentum at E3 '05 with a creative addition: troop control via the GCN mic. Now, as his new game rolls into stores, Saito spills all in an exclusive NP interview. Let the crazy-talk begin!

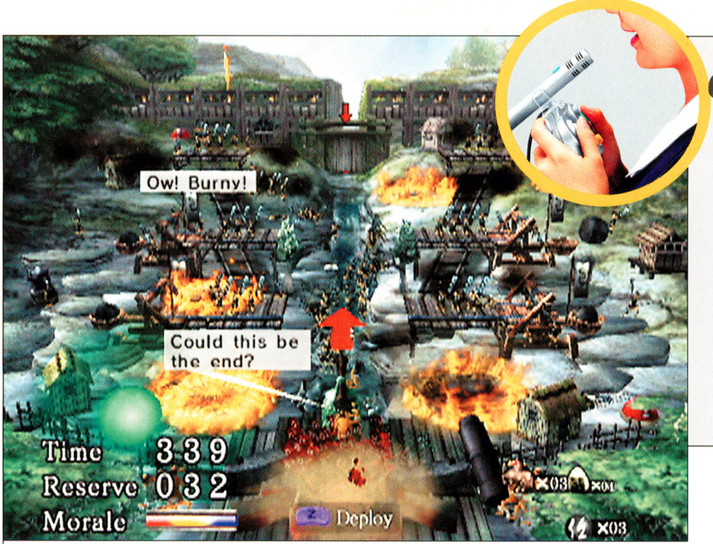
Nintendo Power: Gamers labeled your last game, Seaman, as a life sim. You shrugged off that label, describing it as a confessional booth where the player could make a copy of himself. Gamers may now call Odama a military pinball game. But what do you call it?
Yoot Saito: I think that the game-genre names are currently very poor. RPG, action, strategy, simulation, adventure—all of these are seriously limited in their descriptive power. The themes of games, as well, are currently restricted to a narrow range. Therefore, we're seeing many games that are similar to each other.

I'm a game designer. And, to me, a game designer is a person who creates a new *grammar* of gaming, not simply a person who produces just another game. When I create a game, publishers always ask me the same question: "What category does this game fit into?" I always answer by naming an entirely new genre that my work belongs to. In Odama's case (and this doesn't translate so well into English!), I gave it the genre name of "falling–castle action by sheer force of numbers." Sounds like a joke, but I'm dead-serious when I've said that.

I don't know who coined the genre name of "military pinball" for Odama, but since I've never heard this label used for a game before, I like it, since it puts Odama in its own category. The essence of Odama is that the player must worry about losing soldiers as he travels down the path to victory. As the player commands the troops, the soldiers let you know what they're thinking and feeling, and the emotional bond between a general and his troops becomes very clear. On the way to victory, the losses can be terrible, and a general needs to feel responsible. That's what Odama's truly all about. So perhaps North American gamers may coin yet other genre names for Odama, such as "contradiction-of-war pinball." The expression of video games needs to be more highly developed, by the designers who make games and gamers who discuss them, which would ultimately result in much more variety.

NP: Some people say you don't create *games* at all, but experiences. But let's ignore what other people call your games! How do you describe what your studio produces?
Saito: Since Vivarium is a small studio, I don't see any point in developing the titles that big companies can produce. I think that my unique role is to achieve what big companies can't do—whatever you want to call it.

NP: Odama, set in 1539, meditates deeply on the warring-states period in medieval Japan. Why did you choose this period of history?



> **"To play Odama well, you'll have to use your brain and your voice. If you merely focus on reflexes, you'll wind up with extremely high casualties..."**

Saito: During the warring-states period, Japan was constantly ravaged by bloody battles that tore apart the country, and countless soldiers died quickly as a result. Since I wanted the player to think about what soldiers might have felt when they're caught up in a war, there seemed to be no better period than this extremely brutal era.

NP: You've said that action and shooting games weren't forms of expression that interest you. But Odama seems very action-driven, compared to your previous games. Do you see Odama as an action game?

Saito: I think that the typical action game and shooting game is a simple competition of reflexes. I like games that tap into brain power—that's why I've made that comment in the past. To play Odama well, you'll have to use your brain and your voice. If you merely focus on reflexes, you'll wind up with extremely high casualties among your soldiers.

NP: You've never gone to war before with your vision. Why now?

Saito: Let me expand on what I touched on earlier when I said that some may call this a "contradiction-of-war pinball" game. In a standard war game, the goal is simply to kill others. In Odama, I wanted to express the true contradictions of war, where achieving an important victory results in terrible losses. In addition, there's some public opinion that certain kinds of video game content will have a bad influence on younger players. Because this was a joint project with Nintendo, I wanted Odama to fit in with what I see as Nintendo's image, which is about making games that are positive and constructive. When I also added my own flavor to the project, the result was an Odama that is about a different perspective on war.

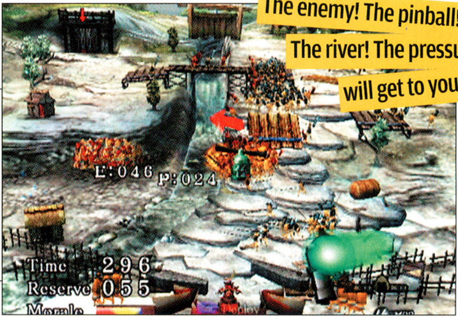
NP: In each battle, while the carnage of pinball and military action rages all over, the ultimate goal is to guide a bell-carrying crew across the field to enter a distant gate. That's a very foreign idea, especially in a war game. Could you explain what the bell crew is?

Saito: Don't worry. This isn't a common concept in Japanese culture, either! No one who actually goes to war should ever have to shoulder the burden of such a heavy bell! At the start of development, we didn't have a bell-crew concept. I had been pursing a more universal concept of war in which a group of soldiers rushes into a battlefield controlled by an opponent. But then I soon noticed that there was no central focus for the player. We needed something to keep the player's attention on such a busy field—like the ball in a football game. I needed *something* to show the degree of progress. It could have been something else, but I wanted something that could be smacked with the ball and I wanted some object with Japanese flavor, so we settled on the idea of the bell.

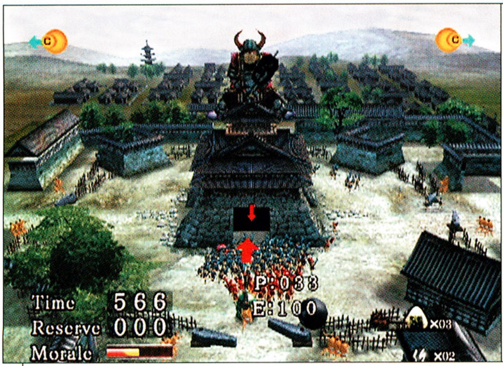
NP: The military advisor in the game, who speaks directly to the player before and after battle, has one of the greatest personalities I've ever heard in a game. Much like the talking man-fish in Seaman. What do you look for in voice talent?

Saito: The voice-acting for the advisor was done by a famous Japanese actor named Hideji Otaki. No one had ever considered him for voice work in a video game, though his name is extremely well-known in Japan. Since North American audiences probably won't know of him, let me make a comparison: Otaki's standing in Japan is comparable to the best Shakespearean actors in Western countries. Now, why did I include such an opinionated advisor in Odama? I've learned that being the president of my own company, Vivarium, means that I have a very solitary position. As president, I can make any decision I want that affects all of my people, but, ironically, I'm totally alone. So I often wish that I could be praised for my good decisions—but also upbraided for my bad ones! That's an important element that I wanted for Odama. And I knew that

> **"On the way to victory, the losses can be terrible, and a general needs to feel responsible. That's what Odama's truly all about."**

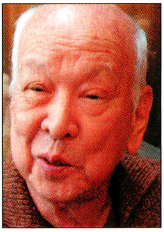


The enemy! The pinball! The river! The pressure will get to you.



> “I’d long had a dream to destroy medieval castles with some big construct—such as a big rolling ball.”

no one would be better than Hideji Otaki. It took a long time to negotiate until he accepted my offer, but I simply couldn’t consider any other actor since the earliest planning phase. May I mention a Japanese website where I share more thoughts on this subject? It’s a place where I’ve waxed philosophical about quite a few subjects. Unfortunately, it’s not in English, but you can find it at www.1101.com/head/2004-05-13.html.



Veteran actor Otaki: Saito would consider no other.

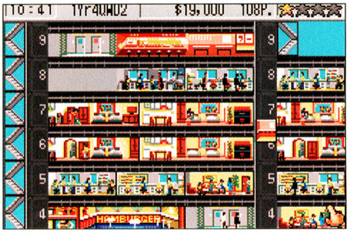
NP: SimTower, Seaman, and Odama all put the player in touch with something that feels alive, whether it’s the high-rise full of people, a man-faced fish, or a field full of soldiers. What’s essential for making something feel alive to a player?

Saito: I have a strong passion for expressing creatures: Sometimes as more animal-like. Sometimes as creepy. Sometimes as cute. Sometimes as sad and pained. I’m constantly thinking about how to make those creatures feel real. My approach involves cutting through a complicated reality by following just one axis. Just one concept. Ten years ago, SimTower was highly praised by one Japanese architecture magazine, which said that the game was realistic and considered every detail very well. But, truly, SimTower didn’t have any realistic calculations or considerations behind architecture. There’s no air conditioning, water supply, or any of the other myriad details that go into a building an actual high-rise. When I created the high-rise-raising game, this was my only guiding principle: people moving around. By reducing the complexity to that one concept, that one reality—people on the move through rooms—was superenhanced.

It’s vital for a game designer to reconstruct reality along one axis of expression. By doing so, the characters in a game take on real life in a player’s mind. I really don’t think that pursuing better graphics enhances the feeling of reality.

Try to see it this way: When you’re engaging with another person over the phone or via online chat, you don’t see the face of that person. The “graphics” of that person, that is. But you do start feeling the reality of that person when the other person starts to respond to your comments. Therefore, by creating an environment that follows a clear axis, the reality of creatures can be enhanced by amplifying their reactions.

Many creators have a strong wish to show reality, but they tend to create overly complicated environments. I believe that a player must perceive a clear, causal relationship to feel reality, and that’s mostly lost when there are so many complex reactions happening. So to make something feel very alive, I create a crystal-clear relationship between the player and creatures or characters.



The Tower SP, a new GBA release based on Saito’s breakout game SimTower, shows how he emphasized one reality (people moving around) to make the game feel hyperreal.

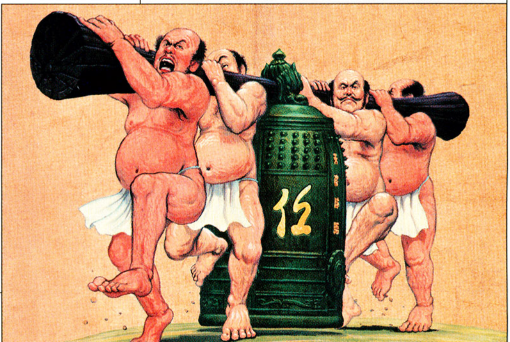
NP: Have you had a longtime fascination with pinball? Or is pinball a more recent interest?

Saito: I played pinball a lot in my youth. And I mean a lot. But I didn’t create Odama because I liked pinball. In fact, I probably would never have made a pinball video game if I still played pinball, because digital control could never achieve the physical feeling of real pinball. The advantage to digital pinball, however, is that I could combine elements that could never happen in real pinball. Surreal stuff. Japanese soldiers in a medieval period on a pinball field? That could only happen in a digital world, and that’s why I did it.

NP: Voice control in console games has had a bumpy history, but you’ve had success with Seaman and Odama. What works and what doesn’t in making such control fun?

Saito: Very good question. In Seaman, I used voice control for conversation. In Odama, I used it for commands. Totally different. Many people who look at Odama think that the voice control makes the play control more complicated. Actually, voice control simplifies Odama. At one point, we tested what it’d be like to do all of Odama’s voice-controlled actions via button control. And those actions were way too complicated; flipper control became too difficult, too. That was right before E3 2004, when Odama made its first appearance. The human brain is far more intelligent than a computer, so things that are difficult to accomplish via buttons can happen very easily through voice commands.

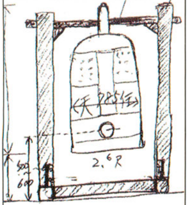
> “No one who actually goes to war should ever have to shoulder the burden of such a heavy bell!”



BELL TOLLS FOR E3

SOUNDS LIKE A BIG HEADACHE!

Saito wanted more than a playable Odama at E3 '05. He wanted a real-life bell beside it. Making that happen for E3—difficult but doable. What happened afterward—a major pain!



The bell required detailed blueprints, since Saito sought perfect authenticity.

As if the bell weren't heavy enough, the pieces of its frame added evil tonnage.

Saito's vision paid off with a bell that was a head-turning force in Nintendo's E3 booth.

But where do you transport and store such a mammoth bell? It's been a nightmare for Nintendo ever since!

Seaman listened, but soldiers are a different breed.

NP: What led you to combine pinball with military strategy in Odama?

Saito: I'd long had a dream to destroy medieval castles with some big construct—such as a big rolling ball. And I'd always had a vision that many small people would be walking and running around in that scene. It's very likely that I was influenced by a major crime covered on national television when I was young. Terrorists were holed up in a cottage with hostages, and TV reporters stayed glued to the event as it unfolded. Police tried to break in and rescue the hostages, but the cottage was located on a high spot, so the police couldn't attack with their guns and standard procedures. The situation was at an impasse for several days. But then the police brought in a towering crane with an iron ball and smashed a huge hole in the side of the cottage to gain access. The terrorists were arrested, and the hostages were saved. I watched it all. The pinball metaphor came to mind only after we had started discussing the game planning, but when I come to think about it, my memory of that incident might have had some influence on the decision.

NP: Seaman's visual design featured a fish that had a realistic *human* face, and Odama has a Spider Temple boss: a spider with a human head. Why do human-animal hybrids fascinate you?

Saito: What people consider typically monstrous faces have been done to death in other games. People often think of human faces and hands as the most beautiful among all lifeforms, and I can't disagree, but they can be terrifying, as well.

NP: Odama's story playfully touches on a fictional, medieval Nintendo history, with quite a few inside references. Why did you bring Nintendo into this medieval story?

Saito: Because I don't like to include things that don't impact gameplay directly, I usually don't have an overly complicated story. But, for Odama, I wanted a humorous approach. Kagetora Yamanouchi, the general who commands the troops, takes his name from the former president of Nintendo, Hiroshi Yamauchi, who built Nintendo into the game company it is today. I have incredible respect for Mr. Yamauchi's way of life, and I deeply value him for being the founding father of modern-day Nintendo. His philosophy established Nintendo and still permeates every corner of the company today. Therefore, I used Nintendo's culture for Odama, which puts him in the center of the world of the game. Mr. Yamauchi's way of life is very interesting, far more interesting than fiction. Though he's now retired, he's still very active in Japanese society, recently donating a huge amount of money to build a prominent hospital. Spending money for social good, not for one's own selfish desires, was once a common ideal in Japan, but that's become old and lost in modern Japan. Many people don't know the history of how Mr. Yamauchi shaped his family's business into the global company we now know as Nintendo, but it's a fascinating story full of his philosophy. I wanted to get at the heart of that story in Odama-but from a completely different direction.

NP: The final medieval battle involves one of the biggest plot twists in gaming history. Though we won't spoil it here, we have to ask: Why did you include that awesome shocker?

Saito: It relates to the previous question, actually. When players see what happens, I really wanted them to think, "Aha! This game is talking about Nintendo!" I was flabbergasted when Nintendo actually *approved* the idea.

NP: It must be far easier for a team to make a first-person shooter, since that genre is so well-defined. How do you help a development team see *your* visions?

Saito: It's always common that my staff has no idea what I'm talking about when we start a new project. Vivarium's used to that by now! But creation of a new title is almost the exact same thing as inventing something completely new. It's not easy, and it tends to become a long-term project.

NP: Do you consider this a game that can touch people of many ages and skills? Or is it for only hard-core gamers? Or do you even consider audience when you're dreaming up a game?

Saito: To be honest, I don't target the end user. I aim for what I think is fun. Perhaps this is the reason my games have more adult players. I can only assume that this is one reason that Nintendo gave me the opportunity to create Odama—to appeal to more adult players.

NP: You've used the technology of your day unlike anyone else. If you'd been a creator in a different time—let's say in the Renaissance—how would you have expressed yourself? Would you have made "games"?

Saito: I don't think that I would have ever made games in the Renaissance! But even if I would have done so, the "hardware," so to speak, was making such leaps and bounds at the time that no one could have enjoyed my "software!" Really, appreciating the masterpiece that a game can be is difficult, or even impossible, 10 years after it first comes out. So please enjoy Odama now, not later!

NP: On a related note, as Nintendo moves into a new technology era, we have to wonder if you've had any thoughts on how you might use the Revolution controller?

Saito: Oh, yes, I have many things to say about this. But I just can't comment right now. You know; confidentiality agreements and all. But wait for my *next* title. I swear that I'll create something that you're going to like. And I look forward to sitting down with you to discuss it at length when the time comes!

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

NINTENDO POWER

OFFICIAL MINIGUIDE

MAGIC TRICKS

Master the way of the wand and command monsters with confidence in Ubisoft's LostMagic for DS.

By Andy Myers

EVERYONE

E

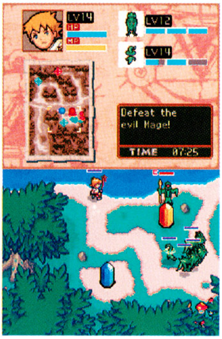
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

SURVIVE AND CONQUER

Becoming a master sage and defeating the Diva of the Twilight is no easy task, and you, the keeper of the Wand of Light, are the only one who can undertake it. To do so, you'll need to acquire the right skills for managing monsters and effectively casting spells with the DS stylus (all of which we cover in detail on later pages). But first, use the general strategies on the next two pages to learn the ropes and avoid LostMagic's early pitfalls.

Race the Clock

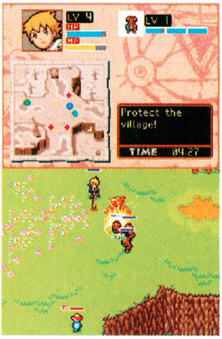
Time limits can be killers in LostMagic, but there's no escaping them. At the start of each mission, check your objective, as well as enemy positions, on the top screen—it will help you formulate a plan of action to finish each battle before time runs out.



Defeat the evil Mage!

Play It Safe

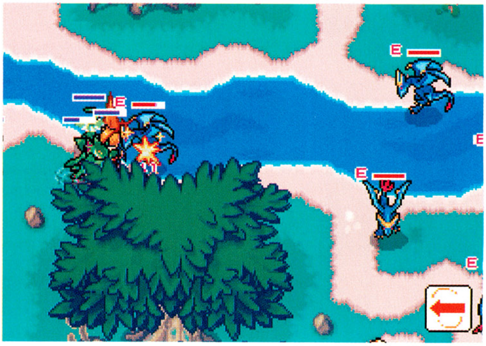
Since Isaac must stay alive at all costs and cannot engage in hand-to-hand combat, it's wise to keep him at a safe distance from enemies. Let your monsters do the brawling while Isaac casts long-range attack spells on enemies, and healing spells on allies.



Protect the village!

Monster Bait

Most enemy monsters aren't very smart—they'll follow the same trajectory over and over until they're distracted by Isaac or one of his monsters. Rather than rushing into a group of enemies and getting swarmed, keep your troops at a distance and use a single ally to lure foes away one at a time. This strategy will work on many maps, assuming you have enough time on the clock to complete the objective.



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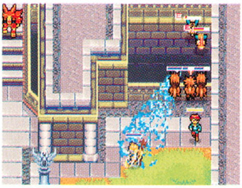
Quick Draw

Experiment with spell-drawing on the battlefield as often as possible. Toward the end of the game you'll have to cast complex spells in quick succession; you'll be glad you practiced.

Block Party

Enemy monsters will usually attack whichever foe is right in front of them. Use the overhead camera to move around the map, and watch your allies' health bars carefully. If an ally's health is getting low and Isaac cannot heal him, move the ally to the back, keeping your stronger units on the front lines to block incoming attacks. This will help you keep as many allies as possible alive throughout each skirmish.

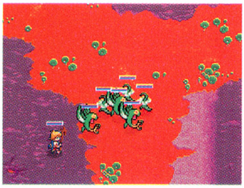


Short Division

In most cases, it makes sense to keep your monsters in a fairly tight pack as you move across a map. But when time is short and you have much to accomplish, you'll need to divide your troops to get everything done. Choose your splits carefully, checking to see which monster types each group will be up against. Don't split up unless it's absolutely necessary, and when you do, regroup as quickly as possible.

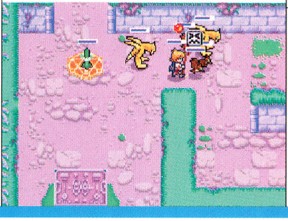
Grounds for Dismissal

Enemies will often try to lure your party onto Fire-based or Dark-based ground hazards that will damage Isaac and certain allies. Fight with flying monsters to avoid the damage altogether, or send in monsters with an affinity for the hazardous element—they'll often be immune to the unsafe ground, and in some cases will even be healed by it.



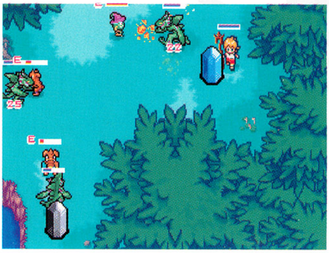
Spawn-Stoppers

A monster portal will often continue to spawn new monsters throughout a battle, unless one of your allies is standing over it. But you won't always have a man to spare, especially when your objective is to defeat all enemy monsters. On maps with multiple portals, assign a healthy number of low-level monsters to your party, and use them to stand over the portals once the area is clear.



Secrets of Mana

Controlling all the Mana Crystals on a battlefield can quickly tip the scales in your favor. Have Isaac or a monster capable of capturing crystals (denoted by a flag icon on the monster's stat screen) stand near a crystal to capture it. Once a mana crystal turns blue and is under your control, it will slowly increase your party's health while you're standing near it, giving your troops a huge combat advantage in the area. And the more crystals you capture, the faster Isaac's Mana Points (MP) will regenerate no matter where he's standing.



Random Battle Generator

Certain battles can be incredibly difficult if Isaac is not at a high enough experience level. Luckily, you can often meander around the overworld map and spark random battles with groups of monsters. These serve as a way to earn extra experience, find valuable items, and capture new allies.

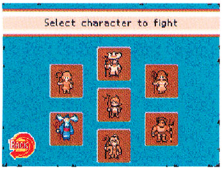
The Thrill of the Hunt

The secret of LostMagic's story revolves around monsters, as will your strategy if you want to have any chance at defeating the Diva. You'll need all types of monsters of all different experience levels in your employ—catch as many as you can in every battle. (See our team-building tips on page 72 for more information about capturing monsters.)

THE WORLD AWAITS

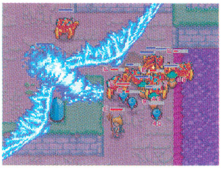
Take a break from your quest to dispose of the Diva and reap the benefits in LostMagic's multiplayer modes. Duel and Free Duel allow you to fight against friends, rivals, and complete strangers locally via multicard play or worldwide with Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Free Duel Mode (Using Preset Parties)



Each time you defeat a boss in single-player mode, you'll unlock the boss character (along with a preset party of monsters) for use in Free Duel mode. Free Duel is a great option for practicing new spells.

Duel Mode (Using Your Own Party)



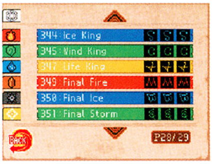
Unlike Free Duel mode, Duel mode allows you to load your single-player save slot to take into battle against other players. Before entering a Duel-mode battle, you'll have the option of crafting a party using the monsters and items you've acquired in your single-player game. Engaging in multiplayer battles is a great way to earn extra experience for Isaac and company. Any experience you earn in Duel mode will carry over to your single-player campaign, whether you win or lose (granted that you save your game after the bout).

CASTING CALL

On the battlefield, much of your time will be spent casting spells with Isaac while your monsters handle the melee. But spellcasting is tricky business, and requires a ton of practice to master. Use the tips on the next two pages (including the comprehenive Rune chart) to find the right spell for any situation.

The List

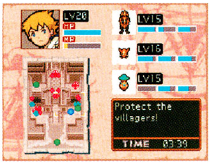
If you're having trouble with a recently learned spell, check your spell book while on the overworld map—it contains a detailed list of which spells you've cast successfully and which spells you've witnessed.



344 Ice King
345 Wind King
347 Life King
349 Final Fire
350 Final Ice
351 Final Storm

Mana Management

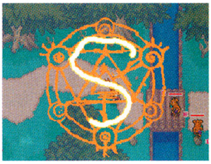
Casting spells effectively is all about rhythm. Choose your spells carefully, and keep an eye on your Mana Points meter—though it will replenish automatically, it can run dry at inopportune times, leaving you helpless in the heat of battle.



Protect the villagers!

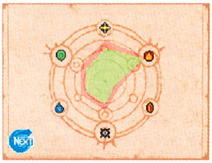
Drawing Skills

LostMagic is not a game that can be mastered quickly—it will take time to get a handle on the game's challenging Rune system. Each time you learn a new Rune, practice it slowly at first, seeing how accurately you can draw the designated shape.



Reinvent the Wheel

The more you use spells of a particular element on the battlefield, the stronger Isaac will become in that element. Try mixing up the spells you use to balance out your experience.

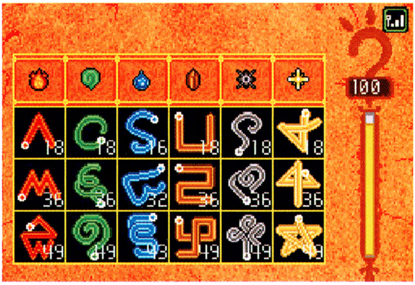


Rune Evolution

Just when spellcasting starts to feel comfortable, LostMagic's system will evolve and throw you for a loop. Keep practicing the spells you learned early on, working toward increasing your speed and accuracy. This will help make the transitions to Duo and Trio Runes a smooth one.

RUNE BASICS

Knowing LostMagic's 18 individual Runes (which you'll learn one by one throughout the game) is the first step toward grasping the complexities of the spellcasting system. Each spell has unique attributes that, if used in the proper circumstances, will be incredibly beneficial. In the chart to the right, we've broken down each Rune's effects when cast alone or on either end of a Duo Rune.



Control the Elements

Each of LostMagic's 350-plus spells belongs to one of six elements. Because most of your enemies will have an elemental attribute as well, knowing which elements are effective against which will play a vital role in your spellcasting strategy. Effective element pairings are shown here:

FIRE VS. WATER

WIND VS. EARTH

DARK VS. LIGHT

FIRE RUNES

001:
Fireball

CAST ALONE:
Shoots a ball of fire in the specified direction to burn enemies

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Fires a projectile that can be modified in many different ways, including locking on to enemies

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to Fire type

007:
Explosion

CAST ALONE:
Creates an explosion of fire that will damage foes within its radius

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Creates an explosion whose size and elemental type are set by the second Rune

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to strong Fire type

013:
Fire Rain

CAST ALONE:
Rains fire and leaves behind lava within a selected radius

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Creates a dragon whose range and elemental type are determined by the second Rune

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to strongest Fire type

WATER RUNES

002:
Ice Shot

CAST ALONE:
Shoots an ice projectile; effective against Fire-type enemies

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Fires multiple projectiles of a certain element in a spray pattern, damaging multiple enemies

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to Water type

008:
Storm

CAST ALONE:
Produces a rainstorm that can harm enemies and harden lava

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Rains a powerful elemental attack from above within a selected radius

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to strong Water type

014:
Freeze

CAST ALONE:
Freezes one enemy in his tracks

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE:
Causes a wide range of effects, from draining HP from enemies to setting a group on fire

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE:
Sets the spell to strongest Water type

Spell-Mixing 101

Learning the game's 18 Rune shapes is only the beginning—you'll need to master the art of combining Runes (known as Duo Runes and Trio Runes) to keep up. Leonard (a mysterious sage you'll encounter early on) will grant you access to Duo Runes partway through the game. Having an understanding of the spell-combining system is important for predicting each spell's outcome and conserving Mana Points. The basic rule to remember is this: The first Rune you draw in a Duo Rune combo will determine the spell's effect, while the second Rune will modify its elemental type and sometimes enhance its abilities.

A Few Examples

There are more than 350 Duo and Trio Runes in the game, and you'll have to experiment blindly to find each one. The following are three examples of combination spells that we found particularly useful in terms of effectiveness and consumption of MP.

041: ICE TORRENT

On its own, the first symbol in Ice Torrent creates a fire explosion that can damage multiple enemies within its radius. When combined with other Runes, however, the explosion's element is modified. In this particular combination, it becomes a massive explosion of ice that deals great damage to Fire-based enemies.

080: WIDE WIND

While the first Rune alone fires a single ice projectile, combining it into this Duo Rune will cause it to fire three powerful wind shots in different directions simultaneously. When you're overwhelmed by enemies on the battlefield, this spell can push enemies away and clear some space.

392: ICE GOD

Though the final symbol in a Trio Rune still dictates the spell's element, Trio Runes are much more unpredictable than Duo Runes, and harder to discover. This particular Trio Rune summons an elder ice dragon that fills the entire screen and damages anything in its path.

WIND RUNES

003:
Wind Blades

CAST ALONE: Shoots a damaging wind projectile that pushes enemies back

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Casts an elemental cloud with a variety of effects, or drops elemental objects on enemies

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to Wind type

009:
Wind Shards

CAST ALONE: Damages multiple enemies within a selected radius with wind

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Sets loose an elemental tornado that is difficult to control, but can inflict much damage

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strong Wind type

015:
Transport

CAST ALONE: Teleports caster away from danger to a specified location

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Encompasses anything from long-distance healing to dropping massive bombs on multiple foes

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strongest Wind type

EARTH RUNES

004:
Earth Wall

CAST ALONE: Creates a protective wall of rock along a drawn line

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Creates a protective wall of pillars with an elemental power dictated by the second Rune

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to Earth type

010:
Tough Armor

CAST ALONE: Increases defense against physical attacks for a selected ally

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Increases resistance to magic of a specified element or bestows an elemental aura that damages foes

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strong Earth type

016:
Boulder

CAST ALONE: Rains boulders on enemies within a selected radius

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Rains elemental hazards from above, usually damaging allies as well as enemies

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strongest Earth type

LIGHT RUNES

005:
Heal Light

CAST ALONE: Restores some HP to a selected ally

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Creates much more-powerful healing spells, often with other beneficial effects

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to Light type

011:
Light Armor

CAST ALONE: Increases Magic Defense of a selected ally

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Increases an attribute of one or multiple allies, depending on the second Rune

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strong Light type

017:
Restore

CAST ALONE: Restores an area altered by magic, such as walls or lava

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Either weakens enemies to an element or strengthens an attribute of selected allies

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strongest Light type

DARK RUNES

006:
Trap

CAST ALONE: Captures a selected monster that's been weakened to a certain point

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Captures more-powerful monsters if the second Rune matches the monster's elemental type

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to Dark type

012:
Curse

CAST ALONE: Reduces a selected enemy's defense against all attacks

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Lowers an attribute (Speed, Attack, etc.) of one or multiple enemies, depending on the second Rune

SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strong Dark type

018:
Poison

CAST ALONE: Poisons a selected enemy for a brief amount of time

FIRST IN A DUO RUNE: Causes various status ailments among enemies (often contagious)

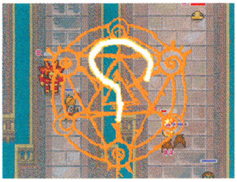
SECOND IN A DUO RUNE: Sets the spell to strongest Dark type

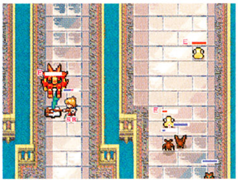
TEAM-BUILDING

Whether you're capturing monsters, building a party, or brawling with enemies, monster management plays a vital role in successful LostMagic strategy. We've provided five basic tips for building a solid team for every occasion.

The More, the Merrier

After Leonard teaches you the Trap Rune, you can start catching monsters and building your first team. This trend should continue throughout the entire game. You should always be catching the most-powerful monsters on each battlefield, using the most-powerful Trap spells at your disposal. Even if you already have a certain monster, catch another one later on—it may be at a higher experience level.





The Right Team for the Job

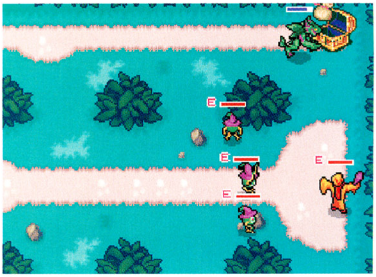
If you die on a map (which will likely happen a lot), the first thing you should try is changing your party lineup. Having monsters that match your strategy will make the biggest difference on most maps.

Utilize Unit Points

Because of Isaac's limited Unit Points (UP), which determine how many monsters he can have under his control at one time, you'll often have to choose between a single strong monster or two weak ones. Whichever strategy you deem correct, always use the maximum amount of available UP. And if you're one point short of an ideal monster lineup, try wandering around the overworld map to trigger random battles and gain more experience—your UP will sometimes rise a point when you level up.

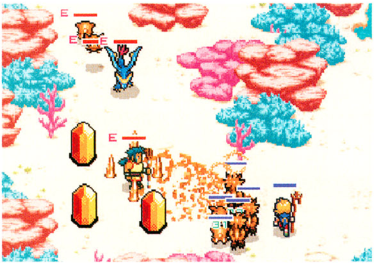
Stock Up on Goodies

Items can be found in treasure chests on some battlefields. Assign treasures to each monster in your lineup to give them various advantages in combat. Space in your item inventory will fill up quickly. Since you can't level up items through use, replace your low-level finds with new ones as you obtain them.



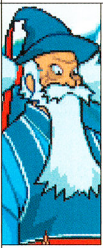
Elemental Affinities

When choosing a party before battle, you'll have to decide whether to bring in monsters of the same elemental type as enemies or the opposite. On a battlefield with a boss, matching the boss's elemental type is usually your best bet. Bosses can often pummel your party with long-range attacks, picking off your members one by one—monsters of the same element as the attackers will often be invulnerable to these assaults.



BATTLING THE BOSSES

Before you reach the game's final boss, the Diva of the Twilight, you will face off twice against the five sages that are under her diabolical spell. (We're focusing on the more-difficult first encounters.) There are various strategies for taking down a sage, and many monster lineups that will suffice; the strategies and monster lineups we've provided are just a sampling of successful approaches, but feel free to experiment. Good luck!

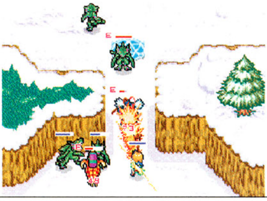


Master of the Curtain Mist

Under the control of the Diva, the Master of the Curtain Mist lives in an icy region and will use his Water-based environment against you. As you approach the boss, watch out for his long-range spells (which can render your party motionless for a time) and his continuously spawning army of monsters.

CURTAIN CALL

Be sure to purify all of the map's Mana Crystals (including the one in the northeast corner) before attempting to fight the master. Position your Death Fish to distract the pesky Hydras, and wait for your MP meter to regenerate completely, then cast successive **Fireball** spells on the boss to take him down.



ISAAC'S STATS: Level 11, UP 5

Death Fish
Level: 11
Required UP: 4
Item: Life Bracelet Lv 1

Lord of the Summer Haze

You must travel deep into the heart of Blaze Lake to reach the Lord of the Summer Haze. Defeating the deceived sage is no easy task. On your journey through Blaze Lake, capture as many Fire-based monsters as possible to increase your options for battle.

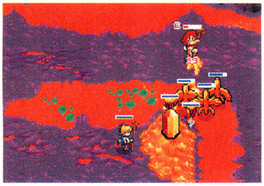
ISAAC'S STATS: Level 16, UP 7

Phoenix
Level: 14
Required UP: 5
Item: Life Bracelet Lv 2

Salamander
Level: 14
Required UP: 2
Item: Dragon Scale Lv 2

SIMMER DOWN THE SAGE

Split up at the beginning, sending a couple of monsters to purify the southwesternmost Mana Crystal while the rest follow the path. Lure foes away from the boss one at a time until she is alone, then move in. Cast **Heal Light** on your Fire-based monsters and **Rapid Ice** on the master.



General of the Gravel Stone

The General of the Gravel Stone resides in Goldsand Dunes, a dry desert land full of shifting sands. You can fight the earth sage before or after facing the Lord of the Summer Haze—we recommend after, as he is a more formidable opponent.

ISAAC'S STATS: Level 19, UP 8

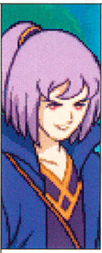
Earth Hound
Level: 14
Required UP: 4
Item: Life Bracelet Lv 2

Gnome
Level: 15
Required UP: 2
Item: Dragon Scale Lv 2

Mush-Mushy
Level: 14
Required UP: 2
Item: Gale Shoes Lv 2

DUST IN THE WIND

It will be tempting to use flying monsters to avoid the map's shifting ground—don't. Instead, employ only Earth-based monsters, as they will be more resilient to the general's nasty long-range attacks. Make your way around the map, covering up monster portals with your Gnomes or your Mush-Mushies. When you reach the earth sage, cast **Rapid Wind** to push him away from the final Mana Crystal, then move in and purify it. Use the crystal for cover, and cast Wind spells such as **Typhoon** or **Rain Gale** to flatten the difficult boss.



Jester of the Prime Moon

Your teacher and ally from early in the game, the Jester of the Prime Moon (or Leonard) is a master of the dark arts. You must face him deep within the City of Ruins to learn your first level-three spell, the Lost Magic of Dark.

ISAAC'S STATS: Level 23, UP 9

Dark Walker
Level: 21
Required UP: 5
Item: Wind Shield Lv 3

Bat
Level: 22
Required UP: 2
Item: Life Bracelet Lv 2

Ghost
Level: 18
Required UP: 2
Item: Dragon Scale Lv 2

LIGHT UP LEONARD

Fliers and strong Dark-based monsters will be your best allies when facing Leonard. As you move through the level, purify the Mana Crystals and destroy all enemies, leaving your weakest monster behind to cover the portal. Lead the charge on Leonard with your Dark Walkers and flank with your fliers to attempt to cover the portals near Leonard. Position Isaac behind the boss, then use **Rapid Wind** to push Leonard away from the Mana Crystal long enough for Isaac to purify it. Finish the job with powerful Light combo spells such as **Rapid Light**.

BOXDOG QUEST

In your travels around Windmill Plains and Wet-Wood Forest, you'll constantly bump into Taro and Zoe, two friends that are searching for each other. Make a note of the specific locations where you meet them—they'll often ask when you last saw the other. If you answer their questions correctly and follow through on this side quest, you'll be rewarded with a powerful level-35 monster called Boxdog sometime after defeating the Bishop of the White Night.

You haven't seen a girl around
here, have you?
Reddish hair, lively personality...

Bishop of the White Night

After passing the Wand of Balance down to his son Isaac, Russell (the Bishop of the White Night) disappeared. Now, in the Balance Temple, Isaac must face his father in battle to learn the Lost Magic of Light.

ISAAC'S STATS: Level 26, UP 10

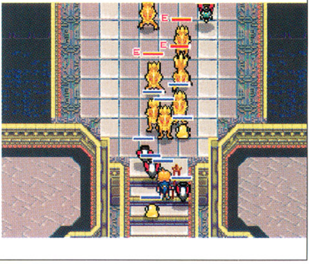
Shine Hound
Level: 21
Required UP: 4
Item: Life Bracelet Lv 3

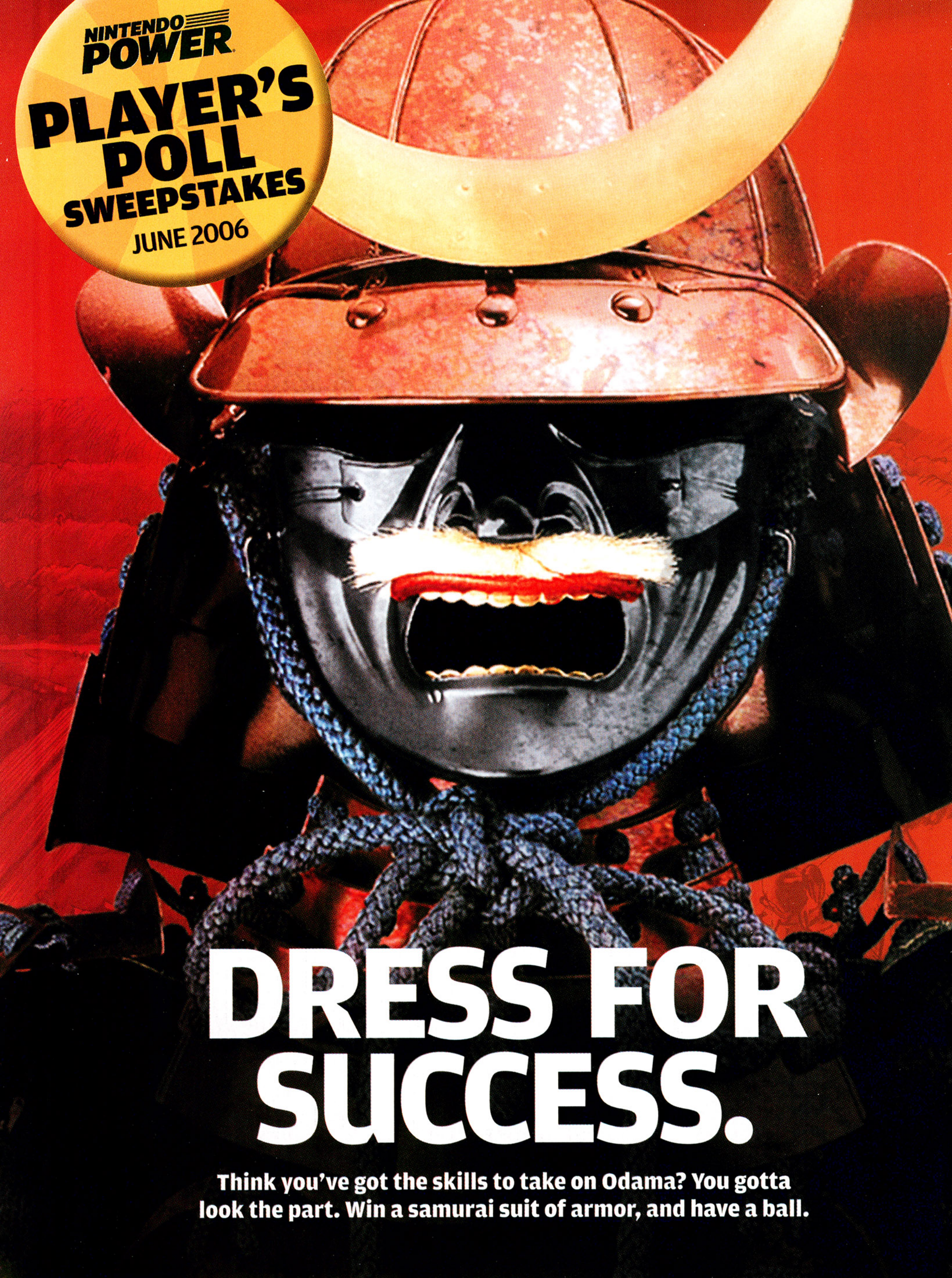
Seraphim
Level: 25
Required UP: 4
Item: Dragon Scale Lv 3

Yellow Shog
Level: 26
Required UP: 2
Item: Iron Shield Lv 3

WHO'S YOUR DADDY!?

Keep most of your group near the starting point, and send out monsters to lure enemies in and take them out one at a time. Once all enemies other than fliers are defeated, heal your party and cast protecive spells such as **Magic On** before closing in on your father on the map's northwest corner. Your Light-based monsters will be capable of withstanding many of Russell's attacks. Let them do the dirty work, casting spells like **Dark Crush** from a distance. If you can spare a monster, send it out to collect the contents of the nearby treasure chest.





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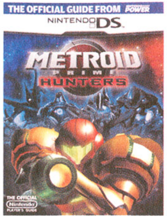
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June 2006, Volume 204

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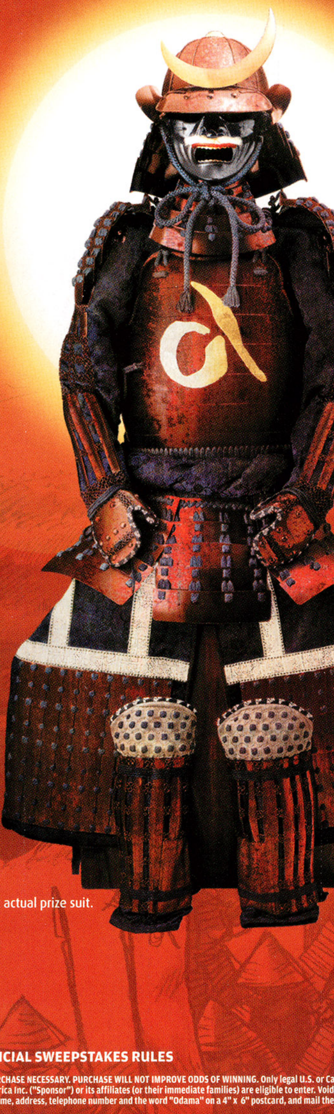

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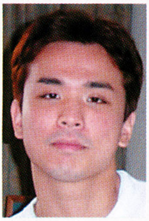
INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 13)

THE SOUNDS OF TWILIGHT



TORU MINEGISHI | **NINTENDO** | **KYOTO**

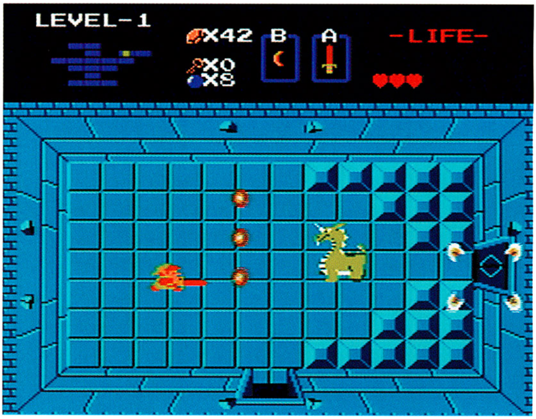
The sounds of a video game take players beyond what they see onscreen by stimulating the imagination and stirring emotions. Through sound, a good game can become great and a great game can become even better. Though Koji Kondo (interviewed in Inside Zelda part 4, Vol. 195) is the composer most closely associated with the Zelda series, the man heading up music composition and sound design in Twilight Princess is Toru Minegishi. A lifelong music and video game fan who created melodies for Majora's Mask and The Wind Waker (among other titles), Minegishi grew up playing Kondo's works, and looks up to Kondo as an inspiration and a master of video game audio. As Twilight draws closer, the young craftsman discusses the road that brought him to his instrumental role on the highly anticipated game, and the kind of feeling he intends to bring to Zelda's darker world.

I promised my parents I would swim 40 meters and advance to the upper class of swimming school if they'd buy me the Zelda game and the Famicom Disk System.

Classically Trained

When I was 10 years old, the first Legend of Zelda was released in Japan. I really wanted to have the game after seeing the commercial for it on TV, which featured a battle between Link and Aquamentus (the first dungeon boss). Not only did the game look exciting, but I thought the sounds were incredible. I was taking swimming lessons in those days, but I could swim only about 25 meters. I promised my parents I would swim 40 meters and advance to the upper class of swimming school if they'd buy me the Zelda game and the Famicom Disk System. I kept my promise and I got them. I got totally caught up in the game, and the sound effects and music were excellent, just as I'd expected from hearing the ad. I had a huge amount of respect for the creators who'd produced such a great game. Mr. Koji Kondo, who is my boss now, was the man responsible for the game's music and sound effects. He worked on Zelda, along with many other games that I liked. When I was kid, I never imagined I'd be working next to him as a sound designer for Nintendo. I have been influenced by Mr. Kondo a lot, and I consider him to be a true master.

My parents like music, especially Latin music and tango. I remember there was always music playing in my house. Ever since I can remember, I've been listening to records such as the Pérez Prado band's. There's always music playing in my current home, too. Listening to this music gives me a chance to become familiar with different styles of music, which is central to creating original



Link's battle against Aquamentus was a defining moment in The Legend of Zelda, as well as a defining moment for Toru Minegishi. When he witnessed the scene's visuals and sound effects, he became determined to get a Famicom Disk System.

I think this Zelda has a darker, more melancholy feeling than any previous game in the series.

Percussion is one of Minegishi's musical passions. He played drums in his junior high band and in a rock band in college, and he currently plays for Nintendo's band, The Wind Wakers.

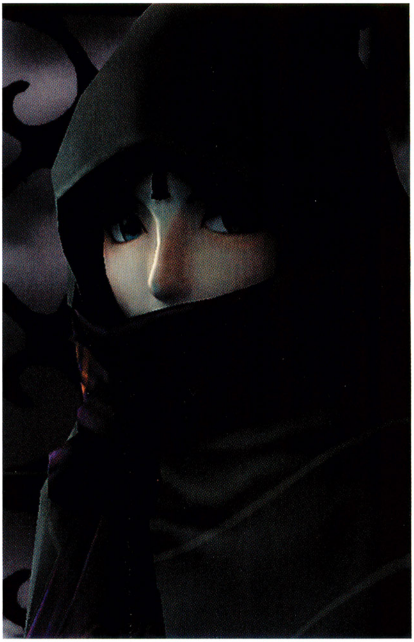
sounds. When I was 11 years old, I first heard Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. That symphony was composed for Mussorgsky's late friend, Viktor Hartmann, who was a painter, and it was based on 10 of Hartmann's paintings. I was extremely impressed. I liked video games in those days, and I thought *Pictures at an Exhibition* was kind of like an ancestor of video game music—the way the music was composed to match visuals. It had a big influence on me and probably helped me get into both music and the video game business. Many professional musicians took piano lessons at a young age or got some special music training, but that's not how it was for me. No one forced me to listen to or play music. It was a very natural process—growing up and becoming interested in music. In junior high, I played percussion in my school band, and even though I didn't study music at college, I formed a rock band with my friends. I played drums.

From Sunshine to Darkness

It remained my dream to become a video game sound designer, so I took a test at Nintendo to apply for the job. At the examination, I needed to create music based on given themes, and there was a written music test, too. Luckily, I passed the test and began my career at Nintendo. However, I realized quickly how different a job is from a hobby. Video game players hear music and sound effects simultaneously while they are moving their hands to play games. When you consider that balance, sound should not stand out too much. As I gained more experience, I learned how deep the sound-design job can be, and what kind of challenges are involved. I was in charge of sound effects in Super Mario Sunshine; that was one game that taught me about the difficulties of the sound-design process.

When you're composing game music, you need to input melodies using a keyboard, but I personally prefer to create the melody in my head first. Sometimes I compose music on the guitar, too. Creative processes are different from person to person, I think. That reminds me: I created the hardware startup sound for the Nintendo GameCube. The deadline was very tight for that job, and I didn't have enough time to come up with very many ideas. I imagined the melody in my head, and I was thrilled that my idea was chosen.

I first got involved with the Zelda series with Majora's Mask, followed by The Wind Waker. Twilight Princess is my third title from the Zelda series. From what I've heard from the game planners, and what I've experienced from sampling the gameplay, I think this Zelda has a darker, more melancholy feeling than any previous game in the series. The Twilight realm, a confined Princess Zelda, Link turning into a wolf, the extremely gloomy feeling of Hyrule before it's saved by Link . . . all contribute to this atmosphere. I am not consciously trying to use any particular genre of music to represent those feelings, but I want to try to express this melancholic atmosphere at the beginning of the game to engross players. Through Link's efforts, the mood will eventually become more relaxed as the game progresses—at least, that's my plan. Of course, the fantastic melodies from previous Zelda games are very important to keep in mind. Like in a *Star Wars* movie, you want to present familiar melodies, but you also want to provide the player with something new. Under Mr. Kondo's supervision, I'm in charge of all the field and dungeon music in



Between working on Zelda games, Minegishi also created the sound effects for Super Mario Sunshine.

In order to respond to these types of needs, it's important for sound designers to be familiar with various kinds of music.

Twilight Princess. It's a totally new experience for me to have discussions with different groups that are in charge of different sections of the game. It's a tough challenge, but it's also a great opportunity to experience something new and produce work that's worth doing. I guarantee that all the teams are concentrating very hard on the development of Twilight Princess!

The Spice of Life

If any readers are dreaming about becoming video game sound designers, I recommend familiarizing yourself with a variety of musical genres. During the development of Animal Crossing, I was in charge of composing K.K. Slider's "present music." I needed to create more than 50 different musical tracks! It had to be from all kinds of musical genres, and it also had to sound like it was played on some cheap keyboard! I had no problem composing music from genres I was already familiar with, but I couldn't create tunes from more than 50 different genres just using my imagination. I needed to study hard and learn about a variety of music to complete the project, and it was a very tough job to squeeze all that information into my head. In order to respond to these types of needs, it's important for sound designers to be familiar with various kinds of music.

Minegishi worked like a dog when when he had to compose K.K. Slider's wide array of Animal Crossing tunes.

Regarding my recent favorite music, I've been captivated by Sting over the last several years. I am not usually a person who listens to a lot of popular Western music, but one day I was casually listening to it and I liked it a lot. I went to his concert when he visited Japan. His music has rich melody lines, and his voice is very appealing. Maurice Ravel is my current favorite classical composer, and I also like Andrew Lloyd Webber, the composer of famous musicals such as *Phantom of the Opera*. I'm a big musical fan, and I even visited New York City once to see several Broadway musicals. Alan Menken, who created Disney's modern musical-style animated features such as *Aladdin*, is another favorite. Disney's feature animation provided a very good reference when I worked on The Wind Waker. Their films demonstrated how to synchronize music with character animation.

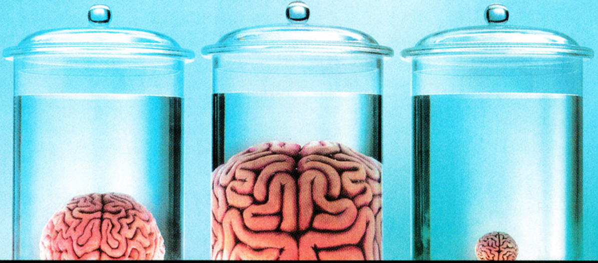
Generating Reality

Ocarina of Time achieved a milestone by eliciting realistic feelings from players through maximizing the power of hardware. Twilight Princess is going in a similar direction to Ocarina of Time's by also appealing to players who enjoy a more-realistic style. In both games, the role of sound is very important. Sometimes sounds can generate more from one's imagination than visuals can. I want to create high-quality sounds to emphasize those moments in Twilight Princess, and generate a reality even grander than that in Ocarina of Time.

Of course, I am currently very busy and need to work very late. As Twilight Princess director Eiji Aonuma mentioned in his interview (in Vol. 192), Nintendo has an intra-company brass band called The Wind Wakers. Mr. Aonuma is manager, and I am bandleader. We'd like to have a concert soon, but we've had a hard time finding time to practice. Some nights when I've been working really late, I'll stop by the band's warehouse and play drums for a while. It helps me relax and refreshes my energy for work. You can count on me to deliver my very best.

It looks all dark and gloomy...
almost like it could start crying
any second now...
How sad...

The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask was the first Zelda title that Minegishi worked on. Like Twilight Princess, Majora's Mask featured its share of melancholic themes.



THIS IS THE PART WHERE YOU FIND OUT WHO'S SMARTER.

You can school your family and friends in Big Brain Academy.™ Compete to find out who's got the heaviest brain. Then gloat when you find out it's yours. This only happens on Nintendo DS.

NINTENDO DS
Big Brain Academy
WHO HAS THE BIGGEST BRAIN?
Finished
Let's take a look at the categories.
Results
1052g

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

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NINTENDO DS™

Classified Info

Nobody likes a cheater. Except us.

Clean Up the Streets

>TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

Having trouble cleaning up the Big Apple? Then call in these codes as backup. To use them, pause the game and access the City Map screen, then hold **L** and **R** and press the corresponding buttons to activate the desired cheat codes. After you input a code, a message will confirm that the cheat was entered correctly.

Red Gone Wild (unpause to play Redman Gone Wild minigame):

Y A A X Y B

Fights Open (open all fights in the city):

B B X X B

New Outfit in Puma Store:

Y A X B

All Music Unlocked:

X B X B

Ghetto City (set all precincts to maximum crime rate):

A B A Y Y Y

Street Races Open (open all races in the city):

Y Y A A Y

Millionaire (get a million dollars):

B B Y B Y B

Ultra Easy Mode (take 25 percent damage):

X B A A Y X

Super Cop (flash badge or fire warning shot to reduce Rogue Meter to zero):

Y A Y A Y Y

Double Damage:

A A B A A A

Unlimited Ammo:

X B A B B Y

Unlimited Endurance:

X B A B A X

Zombiefied:

X Y B A B A

Primate Passwords

>DK: KING OF SWING

At the title screen, press **up**, **L**, **B**, and **A** simultaneously to access a password screen. Enter any of the following codes to receive their benefits. After entering a code, you will get a confirmation message. When you're finished, press **B** multiple times to back out of the menu and return to the title screen.

Unlock Climbing Race 5 in Jungle Jam:

55860327

Unlock Obstacle Race 4 in Jungle Jam:

35805225

Unlock Attack Battle 3 in Jungle Jam:

65942922

Chillin' Cheats

>SSX ON TOUR

Hit the slopes with these cheats to leave the opposition in the cold. Choose Cheats from the Extras menu to input these passwords. You'll get a message confirming correct code entry for each one.

One Horn, One Love

Unlock secret character Mitch Koobski the unicorn

MOREFUNTHANONE

☐ Snorkel
☐ Headphones
☐ Vintage Flier
☐ Viking Helmet
☐ Riot Helmet
☐ Funky Hat
☐ Bat Wings

New Threads

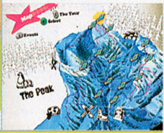
All Rewards clothing available

FLYTHREADS

The World Is Yours

Unlock all Freeride courses

BACKSTAGEPASS



Show Time

Unlock all movies

THEBIGPICTURE

Movies
Play
Back

Bling Bling

Get $99,000,000

LOOTSNOOT

Monsters Are Loose

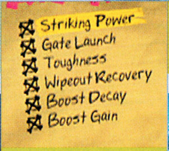
Activate all Monster Tricks

JACKALOPESTYLE

Snowball Fight

Press L or R to hurl snowballs

LETSPARTY



☒ Striking Power
☒ Gate Launch
☒ Toughness
☒ Wipeout Recovery
☒ Boost Decay
☒ Boost Gain

Feel the Power

Activate all attributes

POWERPLAY

Full Boost, Full Time

Infinite boost

ZOOMJUICE

Characters Are Loose

Unlock all characters

ROADIEROUNDUP

Party On Dude

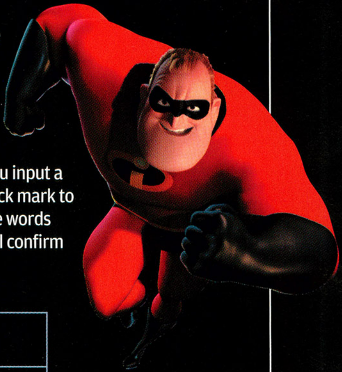
Unlock secret character Nigel the rocker

THREEISACROWD

Super Powers

>THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER (GCN)

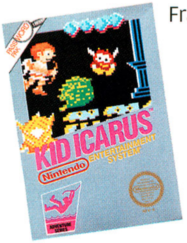
Pause the game and press X to access the menu screen, then select the Secrets option. Enter any of the passwords below to power up your heroes. After you input a code, choose the check mark to finalize the cheat; the words "Cheat Accepted" will confirm correct entry.



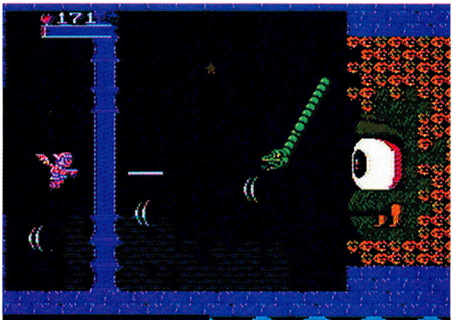
MAXIMILLION	Double experience points		
THISISTOOEASY	Game becomes harder (weaker heroes, stronger enemies)	**THISISTOOHARD**	Game becomes easier (stronger heroes, weaker enemies)
HEADROOM	Small-headed heroes	**EGOPROBLEM**	Big-headed heroes
LEVELLOCKSMITH	All levels unlocked	**SHOWME**	All gallery items unlocked
ROLLCALL	Game credits	**SHAMELESS**	Heavy Iron logo
WHYMUSTWEFIGHT	Unlimited super moves	**INAHURRY**	Gameplay speed doubles
MRIPROF	Mr. Incredible gains 1,000 additional experience points	**FROZPROF**	Frozone gains 1,000 additional experience points
MRIBOOM	Mr. Incredible gains an extra Super Move	**FROZBOOM**	Frozone gains an extra Super Move
MRIMASTER	All upgrades for Mr. Incredible	**FROZMASTER**	All upgrades for Frozone

KID ICARUS

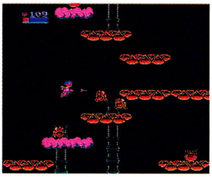
Franchise or not, we still care about him.



PLATFORM: NES
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
RELEASE DATE: 1987
COVERED IN ISSUES: 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 45, 100
SEQUELS: 1



"Icarus Fights Medusa Angels."



The NES was home to many video game classics during the mid to late '80s: Mario, Donkey Kong, Zelda, and Metroid all made names for themselves, and over time they would grow into established franchises. One classic, however, is painfully missing from this esteemed group: Kid Icarus.

Starring the boy cherub, Pit, Kid Icarus is a game of epic proportions. Upon opening the manual, the player learns that Angel Land is in great peril. Medusa, the goddess of darkness, has overthrown Palutena (the goddess of light, of course!) and turned her army to stone. The evil Medusa also managed to swipe the Three Sacred Treasures—the Mirror Shield, the Arrow of Light, and the Wings of Pegasus. Armed with only a trusty bow and arrow, Pit has to fight his way out of the underworld, get the treasures back, and rescue Palutena.

Players learn quickly that Kid Icarus isn't a walk in the park—Pit can jump like Mario, collect items like Zelda, and shoot enemies like Metroid, but instead of just copying these abilities from other games, Kid Icarus builds on them and blends them into something greater than the sum of its parts.

Most of Kid Icarus takes place in the sky, where players are forced to jump their way to the top of each level, which is no easy task—the majority of jumps in the game are over bottomless pits. At the end of every three grueling levels, Pit enters a fortress where the gameplay changes significantly. Rooms in the fortress work like those in the Legend of Zelda: Pit can go any direction through the maze in his attempt to find the boss and defeat it.

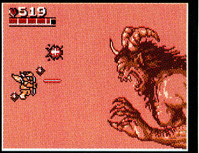
The most notorious enemy, however, isn't a boss, but rather the Eggplant Wizard. When one of the wizard's hurled eggplants hits Pit, the hero transforms into a helpless purple eggplant with legs. Stripped of his weapon, Pit has to find a hospital before he can progress any further. This remains one of the strangest incidents in gaming, and for many it's one of the most memorable moments of the 8-bit era.

In the last level, Palutena's Palace in the Sky, Pit finally gets to equip the Three Sacred Treasures he has worked so hard to obtain. He'll put them to good use as he flies through Angel Land to eventually face Medusa for the ultimate showdown—another classic moment.

Tragically, Kid Icarus's devoted fans weren't enough to prompt a console sequel (see the sidebar for info on the handheld follow-up, however). Until Pit makes his triumphant return one day, Kid Icarus will live on in the hearts of old-school gamers, who may, at least, revisit Angel Land on Revolution's virtual console. —PETE M.

I'm Finished!

COMEBACK KID



ONE SEQUEL

Kid Icarus fanatics are the only ones who know of Kid Icarus: Of Myths and Monsters for the Game Boy, and only the most inspired among them have actually beaten it. Contrary to popular belief, it is not a remake of the original, but a new adventure that is definitely worth playing.

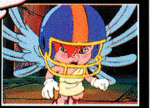
PIT STOPS

Over the years, Pit has found his way into a few random games, including the following:

- Tetris (NES) - 1989
- F-1 Race (Game Boy) - 1991
- Super Smash Bros. Melee (GCN) - 2001
- WarioWare: Twisted! (GBA) - 2005

Captain N

Pit was one of several video game characters on this '80s cartoon show (where he was referred to as Kid Icarus). His depiction on the show was a bit lackluster—he appeared to be wearing makeup!



Have a favorite classic game you'd like to see revisited?

Send us your requests—we'll consider them for a future installment of Playback.

pulse@nintendopower.com

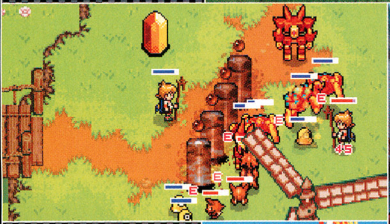
Will Pit ever fight again?

REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

Off the street and onto the world stage, FIFA's cup runneth over.

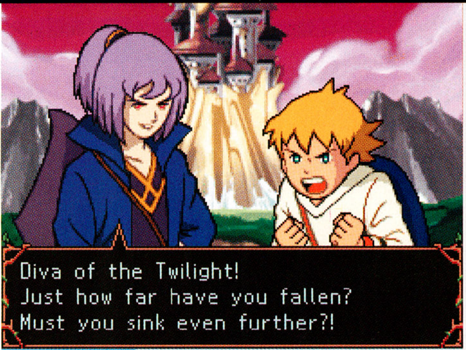
+ Teen Titans, Backyard Sports Baseball 2007 and more.



84
An artistic pedigree and clever touch control make Ubisoft's LostMagic worth finding.

85
The Guilty Gear franchise goes vertical on the DS.

87
The Hulk set the bar for destruction on the GCN. Can Rampage top it?



Diva of the Twilight!
Just how far have you fallen?
Must you sink even further?!

MAGIC MOMENTS

GET LOST

LOSTMAGIC

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Ubisoft**
DEVELOPER: **Taito**
ESRB: **Everyone**

In November 2004, when gamers were first introduced to the DS, imaginations ran wild with ideas for how the unique functionality of the hardware could be put to good use. Role-playing games were a particularly hot topic as gamers speculated on the many ways a second screen and touch control could benefit the genre. While a number of inventive DS titles (Nintendogs, Animal Crossing, and Trauma Center, to name a few) have pushed the boundaries regarding how we control games, RPG showings on the DS have been underwhelming, to say the least. How long must we wait for a great RPG to hit the revolutionary handheld? Well, my friends, the wait is over. Enter LostMagic, a game of epic proportions that reinvents the fantasy-RPG, DS-style.

LostMagic follows the path of a young mage named Isaac as he embarks on a quest to become a master magic-user and save a monster-ridden world from imminent destruction. This is a fairly standard RPG premise, but it's the beautiful art style, intriguing characters, and thoughtful dialogue that bring LostMagic to life. The graphics won't blow your mind—and there's a distinct lack of animated cutscenes—but art director Yoshiharu Sato (who worked as an animator for classic anime films *Kiki's Delivery Service* and *My Neighbor Totoro*) and the fine folks at Taito have created a wonderful story nonetheless. You'll explore a diverse world in which you'll meet fascinating new friends, engage a variety of monsters in battle, and make decisions that affect the game's outcome. One gut-wrenching decision toward the end of the game will drastically alter the events from that point on, and determine what kind of person Isaac becomes. It's moments like these that make LostMagic a distinctive experience, whether you're a seasoned RPG player or new to the genre.

The story in LostMagic serves the game's most interesting attribute: a stylus-centric control scheme. You'll use the touch screen both to move characters around the battlefield in point-and-click fashion and to cast spells by drawing shapes (known as Runes) right on top of the action, as if your stylus were a magic wand. Spellcasting is where LostMagic truly comes into its own. Since battles take place in real time, and your drawing accuracy affects each spell's potency, you must be quick and efficient with the stylus. There are 18 single Runes in the game, and as a rule, the more complicated the shape, the more powerful the effect will be. In addition, you'll learn to combine Runes to create new ones (known as Duo Runes and Trio Runes), making for hundreds of unique spells with a wide variety of effects. As intuitive as casting spells with the stylus becomes, it's also rather daunting due to the large number of spells. Taito has done a fairly good job, though, of balancing it all out by adding new techniques as you progress. There's also a significant exploration element to the spellcasting. Though you'll learn the single Runes from allies you meet along the way, you'll have to figure out the Duo and Trio Runes for yourself, either by experimenting or by paying close attention to your enemies' attacks. The game does a superb job of cataloging which spells you've learned and which ones you've only witnessed. You'll continue to learn Runes all the way to the game's bitter end, and you probably won't feel as though you've mastered the system until you've defeated the game's final boss.

The high level of difficulty in LostMagic goes beyond casting spells—capturing monsters and assigning them to your party plays a huge role in the game's intricate strategy. There's a certain amount of trial and error involved in crafting the right party for each battle, which can be more frustrating than it is rewarding. It's easy to reach one of the game's difficult bosses before you're capable of defeating him, so you're too often forced to meander around the simplistic overworld map, hoping to engage in one of the few stock random battles to earn extra experience. As you've probably guessed, these battles can be incredibly monotonous. In addition, each map has a time limit, which often discourages one of the game's most fun activities: experimenting with spells. But enduring LostMagic's most-difficult moments will all seem worth it when you reach the awesome twist at the game's climax. And the fun doesn't end there—LostMagic offers a good amount of replay value, thanks to a branching story and a robust one-on-one Wi-Fi multiplayer mode. LostMagic is not perfect, but it is an exceedingly fun and strikingly original RPG that will test your skills more than any other DS game on the market. —Andy M.

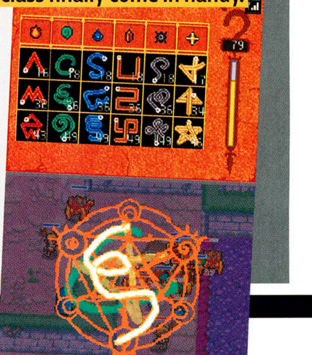
A SECOND OPINION

RATING: 7.0

LostMagic's unique mix of stylus-driven spellcasting and real-time strategy is definitely appealing, especially for RPG/strategy nuts like Andy and me who are starved for some classic fantasy fare on the DS. But despite the game's strengths (which Andy discussed), problematic execution and what feels like a lack of ambition prevent the concept from realizing its full potential. Primitive AI, a dearth of battlefield options, and the way you're hurried through each skirmish severely limit the game's strategic depth (most of the strategy comes from choosing the right units to bring into each fight). I understand why the time limit is there—to keep the battles appropriately brief for a handheld and to encourage success through replay—but it's incredibly frustrating nonetheless. The intuitive spellcasting system, while a lot of fun, suffers from some major balancing issues. You can learn a bunch of fancy combinations, but more often than not, the basic Fire spell is more effective than anything else. And while the story is charming and well-told, the game's world feels too small, causing some of the most dramatic moments to fall flat.

If that sounds harsh, it's only because LostMagic could have been so much more. As is, it's a noble experiment that works more often than not, and will likely pave the way for something truly special. —Steve T.

All those years of doodling during class finally come in handy.



WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING AT E3?

E3 is May 10th-12th, and the anticipation couldn't be higher for Nintendo fans. We asked our reviewers what they'll be running to see first.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Last year, Mr. Miyamoto announced he was working on a brand-new property for Revolution. Hopefully it'll be at this year's show. I also hope that Capcom debuts its Phoenix Wright sequel.

STEVEN GRIMM

I can't wait to indulge in all things Revolution, but I'm really hoping to see the Donkey Kong concept that's in the works. Nintendo tapped DK for the brilliant Jungle Beat; what might DK do next?

CHRIS SHEPPERD

This might be the year of the new consoles, but I'm really excited to see what the next DS games will be. Developers have shown that the sky's the limit with the versatile handheld.

ANDY MYERS

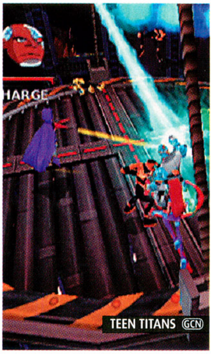
At DICE, we heard Miyamoto mention "another secret" regarding the Revolution controller. More than seeing the new Mario or Smash Bros. games, I want to know what that secret is.

GEORGE SINFIELD

This will be Twilight Princess's last E3 before release. There's still a shroud of secrecy around some of the game's features, but all should be revealed at the show. I can't wait.

STEVE THOMASON

I don't think I've ever been so excited for E3. I'm anxious to see how Zelda's progressed, but ultimately, I want to get my hands on Mario for Revolution more than anything else.



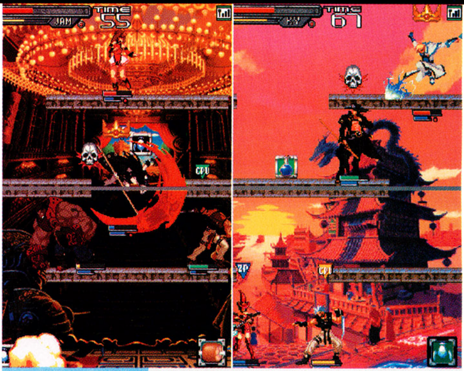
TEEN TITANS GCN

TEEN TITANS

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Majesco**
DEVELOPER: **A2M**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Of all the overdone gameplay formulas, the nonstop brawl may be the one that is most in need of an overhaul. Is beating up a mob of bad guys only to earn the right to beat up another mob in the next room all that fun? OK, it's kind of fun, but not when that's the only thing you get to do, even when some of the enemies are exploding bunnies, as in Majesco's Teen Titans. Yet, if you're going to be kicking and punching repeatedly for 15 missions, Robin, Starfire, Cyborg, Raven, and Beast Boy are good company. Each Titan has unique abilities, including awesome charged attacks, and you can switch control from one to the next on the fly; you can even swap Titans with other players. The Titans and their quorum of enemies make for mighty chaotic action—too chaotic at times. Also, short movie sequences cut in so frequently (often midbattle) that it's difficult to keep your bearings or feel any sense of momentum or progress—it's just fighting and more fighting until you reach the end of the level. Beyond the adventure, the Tournament of Heroes offers battles in 13 unlockable arenas with your choice of 36 brawlers. Both the adventure and tournament allow up to four players, and the activity is more exciting with several participants. Teen Titans is not a lousy game—the play is responsive and the graphics are excellent—but it deserves to be more than a TMNT clone with Titans likenesses and environments slapped onto it. —**George S.**



ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM

GUILT TRIP

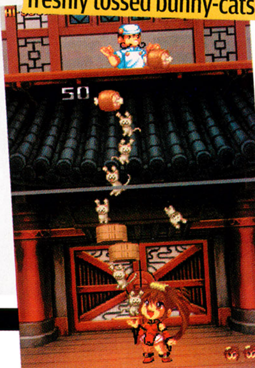
GUILTY GEAR DUST STRIKERS

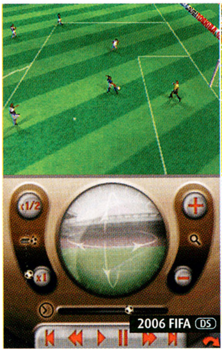
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Majesco**
DEVELOPER: **Xelflex/Arc System Works**
ESRB: **Teen**

What happens when you take the hard-core, precision-based fighting of Guilty Gear and mix it with the multitiered four-player craziness of Super Smash Bros.? You get Guilty Gear Dust Strikers for DS. While the game still looks and sounds like traditional Guilty Gear—complete with 20-plus gorgeous, crazy characters, and an excellent hard-rockin' soundtrack—it's anything but; controls have been simplified (special moves are executed with a single button along with a direction on the Control Pad), blocking is automatic, and combos stem from furious button-mashing. Some of the scientific, technical foundation remains (such as move-chaining Roman Cancels), but when characters can pass right through each other and special items can send bolts of lightning jolting across the screen, you'll quickly realize this isn't the same old Guilty Gear. Whether that's good or bad is open to debate; the game is certainly more user-friendly than previous Guilty Gears, and the flashy action is packed with intense fun, but it's too bad an option for more-complex controls wasn't included for fighting purists. It's also unfortunate that there's minor slowdown in multiplayer bouts, and that certain special moves (those that require players to push in the direction opposite the way they're facing) are somewhat unreliable. In addition to the fighting, GGDS also offers seven wildly varied touch-screen minigames, ranging from Sword Master (slice flying bundles of hay) to Hit Down (tag big, goofy Faust as he pops out of doors) to billiards. Though the games might seem out of place initially, scoring high in these diversions is actually a nifty way to unlock moves for customizable character Robo-Ky. Such extra touches add more appeal to the solid if somewhat casual fighting, and result in a game that's a prime choice for portable fighting mayhem. —**Chris H.**

On tonight's menu: freshly tossed bunny-cats.




2006 FIFA (DS)

2006 FIFA (GBA)

GARFIELD (GBA)

THE GAME IS AFOOT

WILD PITCH

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO GAMECUBE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

A well-played soccer match has a certain grace that's hard to define—a player's skillful performance combines with a team's coordinated effort to make a singular moment of breathtaking achievement that often defies words. This grace is obviously very, very hard to capture. When playing 2006 FIFA World Cup on GCN, you look for these kinds of moments, and though you catch occasional glimpses, the feeling isn't sustained.

The unevenness of the experience is apparent in every aspect of the game—when things are going well, you feel like you have just made the shot of a lifetime. But sometimes fluid chains of passes are bungled when the game misinterprets the next receiver, or a shot that would normally be on-goal veers into the seats behind the net. The typical rebuttal to such critique is that the game is supposed to adjust to nuances of the player's position—if his back is turned to the goal when he fires, he's more likely to miscue, or if the ball is bouncing when the passer makes contact with it, it won't find its intended target. But to see and respond to this kind of detail, you have to zoom too far in, making you unable to see your teammates.

Despite the perennial AI issues, 2006 FIFA World Cup is far from disappointing. When it comes to sports games, the FIFA series is graphically one of the best. The attention to detail on the pitch is always impressive, from the afternoon shadows that stretch across the grass, to the advertisement boards that line the playing field. Futhermore, the player modeling is second to none, the announcing is excellent, and the depth of modes is great, especially for a game centered on a single event.
—**CHRIS S.**

Take a deep breath. It's almost time to shout "Gooooooaaaal!"

Emirates
HYUNDAI
McDonald's

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

2006 FIFA World Cup on the DS is a mixed bag of things that work well and things that don't. The result is a sometimes dazzling, but often frustrating experience. The game offers plenty of ways to play, including a full range of modes as well as skills competitions and a trivia challenge. But during the matches, problems arise. The lack of analog player control means you often overrun players on defense—soccer requires too much finesse to be missing that kind of touch. Further, the default camera is so close that you can't see your teammates, and zooming out introduces choppiness in the graphics. The bottom screen's map of the field takes up a lot of space, forcing the buttons that set on-field tactics to be small and difficult to use. The in-game instant replays are amazing, though—you can adjust the camera in real time while a replay runs. —**CHRIS S.**

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA CANADA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Small athletes on a big field are always a concern in soccer games, and a particular challenge for the developers of handheld soccer titles. EA's GBA version of 2006 FIFA World Cup makes the right moves by offering a medium-close view (accentuating the athletes' smooth, realistic animation and the position of the ball), and a radar view that displays player positions over the entire field. The only place the camera seems too close is near the goals, making you wish that it would pan to your goalkeeper when the other team is on the verge of scoring. As always, the controls are responsive and the bells and whistles are numerous, from choice musical selections to 125 national teams and numerous matches (which include the qualification rounds as well as the World Cup event itself). The GBA-exclusive Penalty Shootout mode is not much of a bonus, but Global Challenge, which recaptures key moments from World Cups past, is a nice complement to the full-game modes. There isn't a world of difference between this game and last October's FIFA 06, but it's a worthy upgrade for those who have World Cup fever. —**GEORGE S.**

GARFIELD AND HIS NINE LIVES

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **GAME BOY ADVANCE**
PUBLISHER: **AMERICAN GAME FACTORY**
DEVELOPER: **LUCKY JUMP GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Americian Game Factory's sequel to The Search for Pooky uses a cat's nine lives to place the comic-strip icon in nine platforming levels. Unfortunately, you have only four lives to start, and even an experienced player will lose them at a rapid rate due to stiff jumping controls and a kicking attack that forces you to stop cold before you can lash out. Other moves, such as a ground pound and a dash that lets you crash through barriers, are more successful. The levels are short, but an item-collection feature offers some motivation to fight through them multiple times —**GEORGE S.**

5:55
RAMPAGE GCN

DRIVEN
06:58
FISH
LURE
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DEPTH
BLACK BASS DS

1500
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Element Dragon
YU-GI-OH GBA

PM 4:00
CATZ GBA

TWINS
MARINERS
INNING
STRIKE!
BACKYARD SPORTS GBA

LAP: 1/8
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2nd
MINI RC DS

RAMPAGE: TOTAL DESTRUCTION

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo GameCube**
PUBLISHER: **Midway**
DEVELOPER: **Pipeworks**
ESRB: **Everyone 10+**

Way back in the olden days of the 1980s, when games more-frequently focused on quick-gratification fun than depth of play, Midway released an arcade game called Rampage. The premise was simple: Destroy everything in sight! Anybody, gamer or not, could enjoy playing as a giant monster and pulverizing buildings, smashing traffic, crushing law enforcement, and eating hapless citizens. That same pick-up-and-play simplicity carries over into Rampage: Total Destruction, but the formula has been updated with more-advanced mechanics, a modern facelift, and gameplay better-suited for a console experience. Pseudo-3-D movement, tons of characters (30 total, from giant gorillas to mutant rats to monster squid), a larger—and expandable—move set, and varied optional objectives in each stage help add more meat to the action. Plus, a healthy dose of irreverent humor kept me entertained; any game that quotes Arnold in *Predator* is fine by me. But while the lighthearted mass destruction is reasonably fun, particularly in multiplayer mode (two-player co-op or versus for up to four players), the game suffers from a lack of technical polish. Chief among the problems: Collision detection often seems off, especially when you're trying to grab specific objects, and controls for jumping and downward attacks just aren't responsive enough. On the other hand, Total Destruction offers more than enough to delight Rampage fans, especially the inclusion of the original arcade Rampage and its sequel, Rampage World Tour. There are many worse ways to spend 20 bucks. —Chris H.

SUPER BLACK BASS FISHING

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **Nintendo DS**
PUBLISHER: **Majesco**
DEVELOPER: **Star-Fish**
ESRB: **Everyone**

In Super Black Bass Fishing, you play as a young boy who lives with his grandfather and gets hassled at high-falutin' local fishing tournaments. You let your rod and reel earn you respect, as well as fancy new lures to catch the biggest fish in the pond. The story is simple and cheesy, but it keeps the game moving, which is nice considering the inherent monotony in fishing games. Once you're in the boat, the action gets unavoidably repetitive, however—see a fish, catch a fish, repeat. The graphics are ho-hum—you might expect better given the recent run of nice-looking games for the DS, but maybe not when you consider the limited settings of fishing. Additionally, the interface could have used more testing—switching lures is kind of a pain, and you'll find yourself hitting the touch-screen pause button all too often in the middle of a bout with the big one. —Chris S.

YU-GI-OH! ULTIMATE MASTERS—WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT 2006

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Konami**
DEVELOPER: **Konami**
ESRB: **Everyone**

It's getting to be that Yu-Gi-Oh! trading-card games have longer titles than shelf lives. Hot on the heels of January's Yu-Gi-Oh!: GX Duel Academy, Konami offers us the official game of the 2006 Yu-Gi-Oh! World Tournament. The game's 2,000 cards include creatures and spells from the new GX universe. Upper Deck's Structure Decks are also included. Other additions are Duel Puzzle challenges, which ask you to complete a set of objectives in a single turn, and Theme Duel mode, which sets objectives for an entire match. The interface is similar to that of the game's predecessors, and the learning curve is as sharp as ever for newbies, though those familiar with the trading-card game should be able to pick it up with relative ease. No additional Yu-Gi-Oh! titles have been announced for the near future, so this one should take fans through the summer, at least. Konami has packed the game with three exclusive Yu-Gi-Oh! trading cards. So, when you're not taking on AI challengers in the game world, you can challenge your friends to a real world match with a few aces up your sleeve. —George S.

BACKYARD BASEBALL 2007

RATING: 3.5

PLATFORM: **Game Boy Advance**
PUBLISHER: **Atari**
DEVELOPER: **Humongous/GameBrains**
ESRB: **Everyone**

I know it's for kids, but that doesn't excuse the fact that Backyard Baseball 2007 just isn't very good. The gameplay is too slow and watered-down to offer anything resembling a baseball sim, and it doesn't go far enough with its over-the-top antics to put it in wacky arcade territory. It's just kind of stuck in the boring middle. The game's most comical problem is that far too many linedrives hit your fielders in the face, knocking them on their butts and causing them to drop the ball. While it's pretty unintentionally amusing, it's also likely to frustrate the game's intended audience. They say anything is better than nothing, but in the case of this year's sole GBA baseball offering, I'm not sure that's true. —Steve T.

ALSO THIS MONTH

What's cuter than the Cabbage Patch Kids? Why, it's the CPKs with cuddly puppies, of course, in D3 Publisher's **Cabbage Patch Kids: The Patch Puppy Rescue (GBA)**. . . . For cat-lovers, Ubisoft offers **Catz (GBA)**, the feline companion to earlier release Dogz. . . . If you prefer feral animals, Buena Vista's **The Wild (GBA)**, an adaptation of the animated film, may be more to your liking. . . . Summitsoft's **Mini RC Rally** is a stripped-down racer that lacks the finishing touches that we've come to expect in most Nintendo DS titles.

[ARCHIVE]

MOB MENTALITY

Games change when several players join in. There's an electrical current in the air when you know that other people are gunning for the same goal. Two new Archive entries—Metroid Prime Hunters (8.5, 8.0) and Tetris DS (9.5)—take extraordinary measures to enhance the multiplayer experience. MPH does so by putting players in the roles of hunters other than series stalwart Samus Aran, and Tetris DS extends its single-card to play 10 players. Both are Wi-Fi compatible.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.
• INDICATES WI-FI COMPATIBLE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
NINTENDO GAMECUBE				
American Chopper 2: Full Throttle	5.0	Activision	201	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	2.5	Activision	200	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	7.5	Activision	200	T
Chaos Field	6.0	O~3	200	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Chibi-Robo	8.0	Nintendo	201	E10+
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	5.5	Buena Vista	199	T
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	VU Games	198	E10+
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
From Russia with Love	7.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
Gun	8.0, 8.5	Activision	199	M
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	9.0,9.5	Natsume	203	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	VU Games	203	E10+
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	VU Games	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Kao the Kangaroo: Round 2	2.5	Atari	203	E
Karaoke Revolution Party	8.0	Konami	199	E10+
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0, 8.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 7	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Mega Man X Collection	8.5	Capcom	200	E
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	7.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	T
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	T
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Odama	8.5	Nintendo	203	E10+
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Pac-Man World 3	7.0	Namco	199	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	9.0	Ubisoft	200	T
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	9.0	Ubisoft	200	M
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Shadow the Hedgehog	8.0	Sega	199	E10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	8.5	Electronic Arts	199	T
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Sonic Riders	8.0	Sega	203	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Super Mario Strikers	7.5	Nintendo	199	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	4.0	Konami	199	E10+
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
True Crime: New York City	8.0	Activision	199	M
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	6.5	Capcom	199	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T
NINTENDO DS				
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.5	Nintendo	196	E
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	8.0	Majesco	201	E10+
• Animal Crossing: Wild World	9.5, 8.5	Nintendo	199	E
Battles of Prince of Persia	6.5	Ubisoft	200	E10+
Blades of Thunder 2	4.5	Summitsoft	201	E10+
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Burnout Legends	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Bust-a-Move DS	7.5	Majesco	200	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	7.0	Buena Vista	199	E10+
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	5.0	Atari	199	E10+
Dragon Booster	6.0	Konami	200	E
Electroplankton	8.5	Nintendo	200	E
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
FIFA Street 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	203	E
Finding Nemo: Escape to the Big Blue	5.0	THQ	202	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin's Great Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Golden Nugget Casino DS	6.5	Majesco	201	T
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	201	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	4.0	VU Games	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	5.5	THQ	199	E10+
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
• Mario Kart DS	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	9.0	Nintendo	199	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
• Metroid Prime Hunters	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	203	T
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Monopoly/Boggle/Battleship	7.0	Atari	200	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	6.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5, 8.0	Nintendo	196	E
Pac-Man World 3	3.0	Namco	200	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Peter Jackson's King Kong	3.5	Ubisoft	200	T
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Pokémon Trozei	8.5	Nintendo	202	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	8.5	Capcom	202	M

REVIEWER NOTES

CHIBI-ROBO

The pacing is slow to start, and stuttered even after it gets going, but when Chibi-Robo's gears are greased, it's an undeniably endearing adventure. The story offers a compelling mix of mundane domestic life and off-kilter fantasy, but the game's real charm is in its environmental exploration, presenting a suburban home as an enormous world where even climbing to the top of the kitchen counter feels like a big accomplishment. —George S.

>KAO THE KANGAROO: ROUND 2

A few levels into this uninspired platformer, you get to unlock a jump-rope minigame. You must input an arbitrary button sequence that doesn't sync with the onscreen action, and there's no reward for winning. And this is one of Kao 2's highlights.
—Chris H.

>POKéMON TROZEI

Though its presentation is fantastic, I found Trozei to be a bit boring as far as puzzle games go. Its system for chaining combos together is so forgiving, it seems you're more likely to accidentally get a combo than to not get one at all. That's not to say that Trozei is too easy—it just doesn't have that smooth, never-ending learning curve that makes puzzle games such as Meteos and Pokémon Puzzle Challenge so insanely addictive. —Andy M.

>TETRIS DS

The grandpappy of puzzle action returns with its best offering since its Game Boy debut, bringing so much game it's ridiculous: solid standard play, gripping new modes, plenty of Wi-Fi and DS-to-DS choices, impressive DS Download support, and lots of visual and audio love for Nintendo's 8-bit era.
—Steven G.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
The Rub Rabbits!	8.0	Sega	201	T
SBK: Snowboard Kids	7.5	Atlus	199	E
Sega Casino	6.0	Sega	199	T
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
The Sims 2	5.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Sonic Rush	9.0	Sega	199	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	VU Games	198	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Monkey Ball: Touch & Roll	6.5, 7.5	Sega	201	E
Super Princess Peach	7.5	Nintendo	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	5.0	Bandai	201	E
Tao's Adventure: Curse of the Demon Seal	6.0	Konami	203	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
• Tetris DS	9.5	Nintendo	203	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker Pack	N/A	Summitsoft	200	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
• Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	8.0	Activision	199	E
Top Gun	4.0	Mastiff	202	E10+
Top Spin 2	6.0	2K Games	200	E
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
True Swing Golf	8.0	Nintendo	201	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
Worms: Open Warfare	7.0	THQ	202	E10+
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
ATV Quad Frenzy	N/A	Majesco	199	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	VU Games	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Big Mutha Truckers	N/A	Destination	199	E10+
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Candy Land/Chutes & Ladders/ Memory	N/A	Destination	200	E
Care Bears: Care Quest	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance/ Aria of Sorrow Double Pack	9.0	Konami	202	T
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Curious George	7.0	Namco	202	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Dogz	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dr. Mario & Puzzle League	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Dr. Sudoku	6.0	Mastiff	203	E
Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure	7.0	Atari	203	E10+
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Drill Dozer	9.0	Nintendo	201	E
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf Bowling 1 & 2	N/A	Ignition	200	T
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World	N/A	THQ	199	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E10+
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy IV Advance	9.0	Nintendo	200	E10+
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0, 9.5	Nintendo	193	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Franklin the Turtle	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
The Game of Life/Yahtzee/Payday	N/A	Destination	200	E
Garfield: The Search for Pooky	N/A	American Game Factory	200	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball Max'd	N/A	Activision	200	E10+
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	8.0	Electronic Arts	199	E
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals	N/A	THQ	199	E
Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: Kaznapped!	6.5	D3	199	E
Ice Age 2: The Meltdown	5.0	VU Games	203	E
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	N/A	THQ	199	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Koala Brothers: Outback Adventures	N/A	American Game Factory	200	EC
Kong: King of Atlantis	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	6.0	Ubisoft	200	E10+
The Land Before Time: Into the Mysterious Beyond	N/A	American Game Factory	201	E
Let's Ride! Dreamer	N/A	THQ	203	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madagascar: Operation Penguin	N/A	Activision	199	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Majesco's Sports Pack	N/A	Majesco	201	E10+
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	7.0	Nintendo	199	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Naruto: Ninja Council	4.0	Tomy/D3PA	203	E10+
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	N/A	Electronic Arts	199	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Operation/Mouse Trap/Simon	N/A	Destination	200	E
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Paws & Claws Resort	N/A	THQ	203	E
Pocket Dogs	N/A	0~3	200	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
The Proud Family	N/A	Buena Vista	199	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Rec Room Challenge	N/A	Majesco	200	E
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E 10+
Shrek Superslam	N/A	Activision	199	E10+
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
The Sims 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	199	E10+
Sky Dancers	N/A	Crave	199	E
Snood 2: On Vacation	N/A	Destination	199	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	5.5	Destination	201	T
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Sudoku Fever	4.0	Global Star	202	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Tales of Phantasia	8.5	Nintendo	202	E10+
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	6.0	Activision	199	E
Top Spin 2	N/A	2K Games	200	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Totally Spies!	5.5	Atari	201	E
The Tower SP	7.0	Sega	203	E
Tringo	N/A	Crave	200	E
Trollz: Hair Affair	N/A	Ubisoft	199	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh! GX Duel Academy	6.0	Konami	201	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zooo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

>TRAUMA CENTER: UNDER THE KNIFE

DS titles built around touch-screen control are undeniably pushing the boundaries of gaming, but they tend to value innovation over a good old-fashioned challenge. Trauma Center manages to succeed at both.

—Andy M.

RESIDENT EVIL: DEADLY SILENCE

My passion for the Resident Evil series won't let me go as far as to say that Deadly Silence was a total disappointment, but it's close. I was really hoping to get a brand-new game that expanded on one of the many potential story branches or, forgoing that, a remake that would take better advantage of the DS's unique abilities. But like I said, it's Resident Evil—they'd have to turn Chris and Jill into Donny and Marie before I'd stop playing it. —Chris S.

>SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

Hard-core platforming fans shouldn't let Super Princess Peach's overly saccharine exterior keep them away. Underneath all that pink is a solid little adventure that should tide you over until New Super Mario Bros. arrives.

—Steve T.

TAO'S ADVENTURE: CURSE OF THE DEMON SEAL

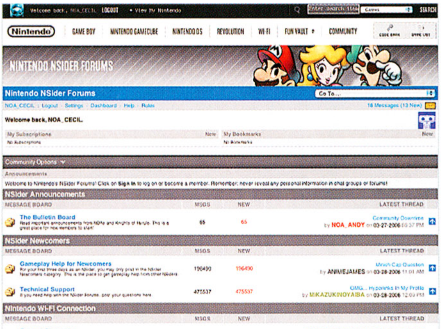
While I agree with Chris S.'s sentiment in last issue's review that Tao is flawed, my complaints stem from entirely different problems. Inventory management I can deal with; it's the boring dungeon design and the fact that you must tap a button on the touch screen to attack that left me cold. Still, Tao is more accessible and more forgiving than other games of the same dungeon-crawling ilk. —Chris H.

BEHIND THE SCENES

THE BIG N IS YOUR FRIEND

Join us for a backdoor tour of Nintendo's NSider community as we explore the benefits of registering your products and joining the ranks.

By Andy Myers



Nintendo NSider Forums

NOA_CECIL : Logout · Settings · Dashboard · Help · Rules   18 Messages (13 New)

Welcome back, NOA_CECIL.

My Subscriptions — New — No Subscriptions
My Bookmarks — New — No Bookmarks

Community Options

Announcements

Welcome to Nintendo's NSider Forums! Click on **Sign In** to log on or become a member. Remember: never reveal any personal information in chat groups or forums!

NSider Announcements

MESSAGE BOARD	MSGS	NEW	LATEST THREAD
The Bulletin Board	65	65	Community Downtime by NOA_ANDY on 03-27-2006 05:37 PM

NSider Newcomers

MESSAGE BOARD	MSGS	NEW	LATEST THREAD
Gameplay Help for Newcomers	190490	190490	Minish Cap Question by ANIMEJAMES on 03-28-2006 11:01 AM
Technical Support	475537	475537	OMG... Hyperlinks In My Profile by MIKAZUKINOYAIBA on 03-28-2006 12:09 PM

Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection

MESSAGE BOARD	MSGS	NEW	LATEST THREAD
General Discussion	55355	55355	WHAT IS A NINTENDO FANS FAVORITE SHOE? by VAPOURBOY83 on 03-28-2006 10:43 AM
Metroid Prime Hunters	124560	124560	Is it me, or do think people bought MPH just for the Wi-Fi? by DARTHMARIO007 on 03-28-2006 12:14 PM
Mario Kart DS	406137	406137	Chilled TBK VS MoonSide Live non Item Match Video Inside. by *(MOONSIDE)* on 03-28-2006 11:17 AM

The forums at Nintendo.com are rife with gaming info and gossip.

Being an NSider rocks. Nintendo loves rewarding its online community with all kinds of swag, from wallpapers to free games. Yet it has come to our attention that many of our readers are not taking advantage of these benefits. In an attempt to address this monumental oversight, we've put together a five-step program that will teach you to become an NSider and milk the system for all it's worth.

Step 1: Register Your Games!

Why wouldn't you? Nintendo wants to give you free stuff! When you visit Nintendo.com to register at least three eligible products (most of which are first-party games released in the past three years), you'll not only become an NSider; you'll also be able to download tons of free wallpapers and screensavers, and all kinds of other goodies.

Step 2: Get Some Free NP

Visit www.nintendopower.com and check out the 3-for-free offer to see if your NSider status makes you eligible for three free issues. Even if you're already a subscriber, you can take advantage of this. The more NP the better, right?

Step 3: Check for Special Offers

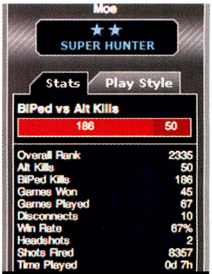
Each time you register a game, check for special offers specific to that game. Past, NSider gifts have included a Kirby stylus and a Pokémon XD GCN skin.

Step 4: Be in the Know

NSiders can visit their My Nintendo profile page and click on Communications Central to sign up for informative updates and newsletters.

Step 5: Tap in to Wi-Fi

A recent addition to NSider benefits is the option to link your Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection ID with your NSider information by visiting www.nintendowifi.com. This awesome feature allows you to track your stats in Mario Kart DS, Tetris DS, Metroid Prime Hunters, and other games to see how you stack up against the rest of the world.



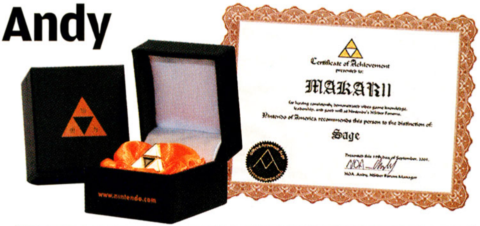
BIPed vs Alt Kills — 186 — 50

Overall Rank	2335
Alt Kills	50
BIPed Kills	186
Games Won	45
Games Played	67
Disconnects	10
Win Rate	67%
Headshots	2
Shots Fired	8357
Time Played	0d 7h

NSiders can set up a Hunters License at www.nintendowifi.com for hard-core Metroid Prime Hunters stat-tracking.

A Message from NOA Andy

If you've spent any time at Nintendo's NSider Forums, you've probably noticed a group of members who sport a shiny Triforce symbol next to their screen names. Who are these VIPs? They're an elite group of hard-core gamers known as the Nintendo.com Sages, and it's not easy to join their ranks. Sages gain access to a special "Sages Only!" message board at the NSider Forums, and receive access to exclusive icons and other great programs created by Nintendo. Do you have what it takes to become a Sage? Check out the NSider Forums to find out.



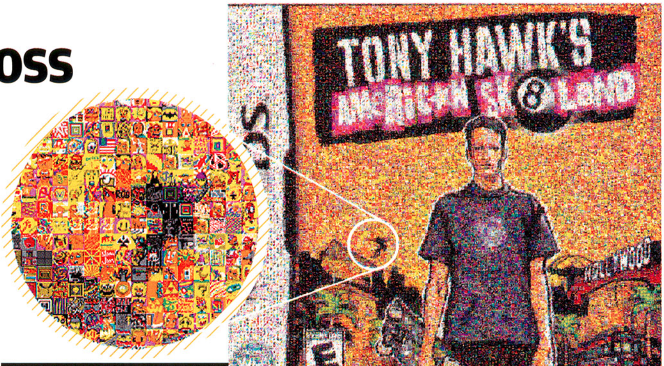
Certificate of Achievement
presented to:
MAKARII
Nintendo of America recommends this person to the distinction of:
Sage
NOA_Andy
NOA_Andy, NSider Forum Manager

Each and every Sage receives a custom Triforce lapel pin not available anywhere else, and a Sage certificate hand-signed by forum manager NOA_Andy.

WI-FI

Icons Across America

When they're not executing BS 360 Melons over Wilshire Boulevard, the Tony Hawk's American Sk8land faithful are making custom art and boards, and uploading them to the game's website via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The site's developers recently made a box-art mosaic out of several thousand fan-created pieces that run the gamut from Link to Mario. To view, rate, and download the pieces to your DS, visit www.american-sk8land.com.
—George S.



It took a nation of Tony Hawk fans to create the Sk8land mosaic.

MUSIC

"Playing" Live

These days, you can't throw a rock without hitting a video game cover band. (Please don't actually test this theory.) While we at NP love listening to gaming's greatest hits pumped out by the likes of The Advantage, Minibosses, NESkimos, and many others, it's great to see a band taking the concept one step further. Enter Athens, Georgia, band Cinemechanica. Rather than playing a smorgasbord of NES songs severed from their source material, Cinemechanica plays the music in its natural habitat: alongside the games. When performing under the name Contraband or Megaband, Cinemechanica plays a game soundtrack (either Contra or Mega Man II, respectively) in its entirety while someone plays the game itself on a projection screen behind them. The word "play" is probably an understatement—these guys shred through the games as expertly as the band wails on their instruments.

When they're not covering NES soundtracks under assumed names, Cinemechanica is playing their own original music, which resembles rock bands like The Mars Volta, but with traces of the 8-bit songs Cinemechanica covers. It may sound strange, but it's actually quite good. Check out www.cinemechanica.com for more details on Cinemechanica and their alternate forms. —Andy M.

Groupie: "Were you the guitar player?" Guy with sweet Tri-Force tattoo: "No, I was the Mega Man II player."

Photo by Brian McCall

Cinemechanica's affinity for NES games inspires an onstage performance like no other.

Photo by Rick Newby

Contra masters play through the game's two-player mode alongside the band.

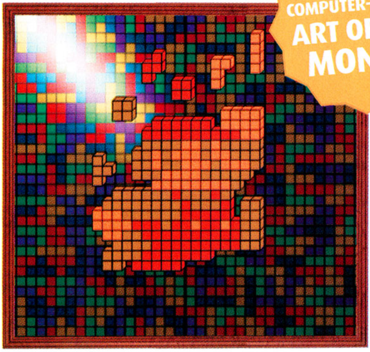
Photo by Brian McCall

ONLINE

Block Arty

We had a feeling that a topic as simple as a pile of colorful blocks might bring out some very creative artwork, and we weren't disappointed. Most of the artists incorporated other games' characters into their Tetris-themed works, and to great effect.

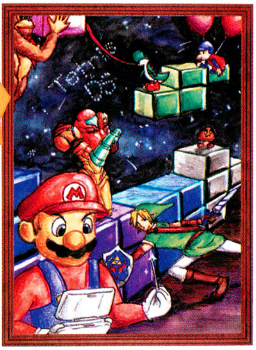
MARCH'S COMPUTER-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST: GAMEGUY31

SUBJECT: TETRIS

MARCH'S HAND-DRAWN ART OF THE MONTH



ARTIST: MARIMBAMONKEY14

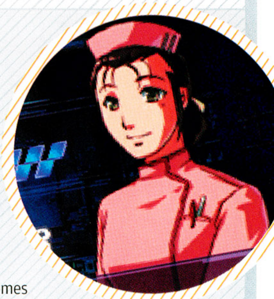
SUBJECT: TETRIS

Looking to submit art for the first time, and not sure what to do? Visit **forums.nintendo.com** for details. Be sure to read the rules before you post your masterpieces. Also, we're always looking for fresh art-of-the-month ideas. Up 'til now, we've done mostly franchise-based themes—if you have a topic that you'd like to see grace these pages, let us know at **community@nintendopower.com.**

NSider Reviews

We've decided to mix things up a bit. Until now, we've taken the best reviews from the Sage boards at Nintendo.com and run them here. From now on, we're going to open things up a bit—any NSider member can post a review for publication consideration. What's an Nsider? See page 90.

NSider Review of the Month



Trauma Center: Under the Knife

reviewed by Zooie

At first glance, Trauma Center: Under the Knife may seem like the first batch of DS titles: dull use of the dual screens [and] a feel of rushed gameplay. But as Trauma Center's characters and story develop and the gameplay becomes more challenging and varied, all of those thoughts will disappear.

Trauma Center features operations such as removing glass from a patient's body and treating man-made diseases that are thought to be incurable. The game will hold your hand through the steps, but if you don't move quickly and accurately, you're bound to fail.

Don't fret if you have a weak stomach. The graphics are detailed enough so that the player can understand what's going on, but not so detailed that they'll make you want to turn the game off.

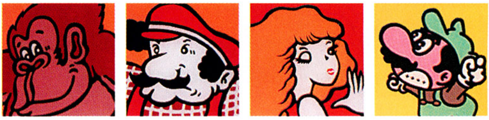
Trauma Center is not without flaws. Sometimes the operations are so difficult that the player may feel that the only reason they succeeded was because of pure luck. The fact that the touch screen isn't as responsive and accurate as it could be sometimes doesn't help the game from feeling over-challenging. The game is also on the short side and could have better replay value. Fortunately, the operations can be replayed to achieve better rankings.

Despite its drawbacks, Trauma Center is a fresh, rewarding game that gives you a new way to look at the DS.

We've Only Just Begun

We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to Community since we began the column—it has turned out far better than we ever could have hoped. From DS confections to Zelda collections, nothing is too big or too small for us to consider for Community. If you have something you'd like to share, mail us at **community@nintendopower.com**

Custom-Made Avatars By Cory Conner



COSPLAY/FANSITES

Pretty in Pink

If there were a Princess Peach Appreciation Society, Allison H. (a law student from England) would no doubt be its president. Her passion for the pink-clad heroine covers all the superfan bases, including a massive collection of merchandise, an unofficial yet comprehensive fansite, and loads of cosplay activity. How does one become so obsessed with Princess Peach, you ask? "[In the Super Mario Bros. days], her age, origin, real name, and connection to Mario were unknown and this purposeful lack of information made me all the more curious about our princess. The more I learnt about her over the years as Nintendo gradually revealed details, the more fascinated and enchanted I became." Imagine her excitement when Super Princess Peach finally came out! —Andy M.

Peach Paradise .com
500 members and counting...
www.peach-paradise.com

At www.peach-paradise.com, it's all Peach all the time.

NINTENDO POWER ROCKS!

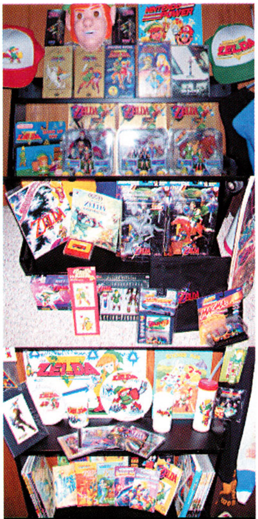
Allison was kind enough to show her love for Peach and NP in one of her many cosplay photos.

COLLECTING

Zelda in the House

As the world awaits Twilight Princess, we take a look at Link's past through the eyes of NP reader Brent S. and his awesome Zelda collection. Brent's obsession with the Zelda series began while playing through A Link to the Past for the first time. "[A Link to the Past] was the first game I had played that told such a detailed story. It wasn't your standard "save the princess" game. That was only one aspect of the game. I never felt bored or annoyed with the difficulty of the game. It was the perfect game." Brent's collection is easily the best Zelda-only collection we've seen so far. If you have a game-related collection you want to show the world, send it to community@nintendopower.com. —Andy M.

Hey! We recognize those books!



Not seen in the photos is Brent's favorite item: his Songbird Ocarina ordered from an ad in NP.

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METROID PRIME HUNTERS

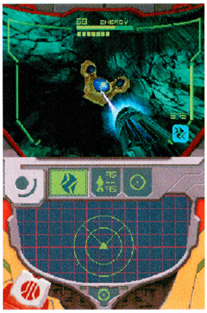
THE GOREA AND THE OMEGA

Samus's mission is almost over: She has found the Octoliths and revealed the prison planet Oubliette. Only one thing stands between her and the ultimate power now: the terrifying monster Gorea. Obtain the ultimate power and defeat Gorea with it to claim victory.

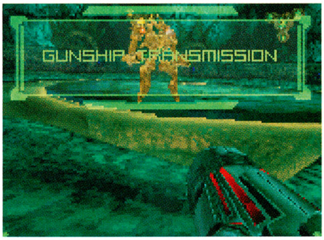
Symbol Crash

There are two possible endings to the battle with Gorea (or three, if you include the possibility of your own demise). The game ends if you simply beat Gorea straight up when you first enter his lair. But if you take time to perform a small but somewhat dangerous side objective, you'll be rewarded with an extra melee with Gorea, as well as a better ending. Let's not worry about the third potential ending.

To obtain the best ending, get the aforementioned side task out of the way during your first meeting with the beast. Gorea will immediately begin to unload a barrage on your position, so keep dodging and moving throughout the battle. Quickly retreat to the outer ring of the large room. Watch out for the moat that encircles the room—it can sap your life meter very quickly. You'll notice six large, glowing panels lining the large chamber—you must shoot each panel with the affinity weapon that corresponds to the panel's color, in a particular order: Use the Volt Driver on the yellow panel, the Battlehammer on the green, the Magmaul on the orange, the Shock Coil on the blue, the Judicator on the purple, and finally the Imperialist on the red. Each panel will spin to let you know you've done it right.



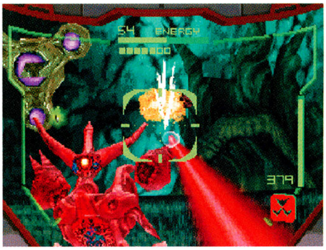
The Shock Coil's electrical beam has a short range—you may need to jump to trigger the icon.



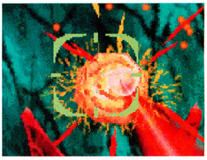
Once you've shot all six panels, your ship will contact you with a message to indicated the task is complete.

Red Means Go

After you've shot the panels, it's time to turn your attention to Gorea itself. Stay along the outer rim of the room—its close-range tentacle attack is too devastating to tempt fate with. As you make your way around the perimeter, shoot the floating blue orbs that line the chamber to pick up valuable health and ammo refills. Gorea will cycle through more-powerful versions of the six affinity weapons, changing colors to match the weapon it has equipped. The best weapon to use is the Imperialist—it can be tough to aim in the heat of battle, but it does significant damage when it hits and it allows you to stay as far away from Gorea as possible. When the monster turns red, fire the Imperialist at its shoulders to make its arms fall off. After you shoot both arms, Gorea will pause and reveal its weak spot. Quickly shoot it in the weak spot as much as possible—you should be able to take off about a third of its total health before it returns to its previous routine. Repeat the process to defeat Gorea for the first time. (If you did not complete the side task, the game will end here.)



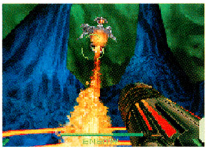
Shoot both arms as quickly as possible—if you wait too long to shoot the second one, the first will grow back.



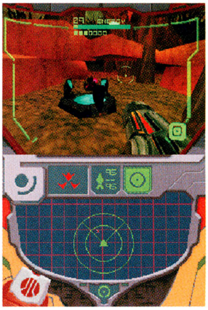
Gorea's weak spot is a giant glowing ball that appears above its body—nail it with the Judicator.

Cannonized

If you completed the side task, you'll be transported to a new, brighter area for the second round against Gorea. The beast will have changed form, and will float around the stage firing slow-moving projectiles that home in on you. As the fight begins, head to the bottom of the level and pick up the Omega Cannon, the most powerful weapon in the game, and the ultimate power of which the Alimbic telepathic message spoke. You'll be able to use only it and the Power Beam for the remainder of the battle. If you've taken a lot of damage, find a clear spot where you can see Gorea's shots coming, and shoot them to earn health refills. Use the jump pads to return to the top of the stage, and employ the Omega Cannon to take out Gorea for good.



Watch out for Gorea's plasma attack—it's way more deadly than the glowing balls it hurls at you.



Don't wait for the ship to inform you of the Omega Cannon—start heading to the bottom right away.

NINTENDO POWER

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MAY 2006, VOLUME 203
The Bros. Are Back (New Super Mario Bros.), Two Brains Are Better Than One (Brain Age), The Lost World (LostMagic), Improving on Perfection (Tetris DS), The X^3 Factor (X-Men: The Official Game), Impose Your Will (Odama), 2005 Nintendo Power Awards, The Only Game in Town (MLB 2K6), Target: Samus Aran (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, The Good Life (Harvest Moon: Magical Melody). LEGO *Star Wars* II: The Original Trilogy, Big Brain Academy, Over the Hedge, Super Monkey Ball Adventure, 2006 FIFA World Cup, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest

SUPER SCOOP!
GET A JUMP ON NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.
NINTENDO POWER
ALIEN SEDUCTION?

APRIL 2006, VOLUME 202
Ahead of the Game (Brain Age), 10 Things You've Never Done in Harvest Moon, Inside Zelda, Sizing Up Mario (New Super Mario Bros.), Space Race (Metroid Prime Hunters), Where There's a Drill, There's a Way (Drill Dozer), The Chibi-Robo Guide to Assisted Living, Past, Present, and Future Phantasia (Tales of Phantasia), Break the Silence (Resident Evil: Deadly Silence), Major League Baseball 2K6, Rampage: Total Destruction, Dragon Ball: Advanced Adventure, Ice Age 2: The Meltdown, Dr. Sudoku, Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier, Baten Kaitos II

SPECIAL REPORT: METROID PRIME HUNTERS
NINTENDO POWER
GONZO GAMING!
VOTE!
EXTREME ANIMAL CROSSING MAKEOVERS
SONIC RIDERS DRIVERS WANTED

MARCH 2006, VOLUME 201
Real Golf vs. True Swing Golf (True Swing Golf), Breaking the Mold (Chibi-Robo, Odama, Drill Dozer, The Rub Rabbits!, Super Princess Peach), Space Invaders (Metroid Prime Hunters), Inside Zelda, Animal Crossing: Water World?? (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Monkey 'Round (Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll), High on the 'Hog (Sonic Riders), 2005 Nintendo Power Award Nominations, FIFA Street 2, Harvest Moon: Magical Melody, Naruto: Ninja Council, Pokémon Trozei, Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Double Agent, Worms: Open Warfare

GIANT POSTER INSIDE!
NINTENDO POWER
200th ISSUE!
PETER JACKSON'S KING KONG
TOUCH EVIL!

FEBRUARY 2006, VOLUME 200
Silence Is Deadly (Resident Evil: Deadly Silence), Inside Zelda, Money, Power, Fame (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Long Live the King (Peter Jackson's King Kong), Drawn to Nintendo, The Fast and the Furriest, NP Top 200: The Final 40, Sand Advice (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones), Point/Counterpoint, Bond Is Back! (From Russia with Love), Fantasy Fulfilled (FINAL FANTASY IV Advance), Guilty Gear Dust Strikers, Naruto: Clash of Ninja, The Rub Rabbits!, Super Monkey Ball Touch & Roll, Tales of Phantasia, Teen Titans, True Swing Golf

EVIL IN AMERICA!
NINTENDO POWER
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

JANUARY 2006, VOLUME 199
Behind the Scenes: Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, NP Top 200, Inside Zelda, Get a Real Life (Animal Crossing: Wild World), Driven to Succeed (Mario Kart DS), Scoreboard Soaring (Tony Hawk's American Sk8land), Final Frontier (FINAL FANTASY IV Advance), Pinball Wizards, Mini Games Mega Fun (Mario Party 7), How to Win the West (Gun), The Shroob Is Out There (Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time), Battles of Prince of Persia, Black and White Creatures, Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day, Chibi-Robo, Drill Dozer, Electroplankton, Sonic Riders, Super Princess Peach, Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop

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POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

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MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

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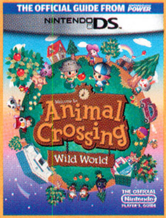
METROID PRIME HUNTERS

METROID PRIME HUNTERS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NINTENDO DS
Animal Crossing Wild World

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

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GAME BOY ADVANCE
FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

FINAL FANTASY IV ADVANCE

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE
- BATTALION WARS
- FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR
- PIKMIN 2
- POKéMON COLOSSEUM
- STAR FOX: ASSAULT

NINTENDO DS AND GAME BOY ADVANCE

- ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE (DS)
- FINAL FANTASY I & II: DAWN OF SOULS (GBA)
- FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES (GBA)
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- MARIO & LUIGI: SUPERSTAR SAGA (GBA)
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
- POKéMON EMERALD (GBA)
- POKéMON FIRERED & LEAFGREEN (GBA)
- SWORD OF MANA (GBA)

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July 2006 Vol. 205

NEXT MONTH

With the DS hitting its stride and the Revolution on its way, Nintendo is making a lot of noise. Watch for big news on both.

I/⏻
POWER
A
SELECT
HOME
START
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3
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REVOLUTION EVOLUTION

The next console is taking shape. We'll have feature coverage on Revolution titles, and early announcements from E3.

A LINK TO THE FUTURE

The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass will appear on the DS later this year, and on the NP cover next month.

SWIMMING WITH A SHARK

Dive in to details on Nintendo's Blue Ocean strategies with executive VP Reggie Fils-Aime in an exclusive interview.

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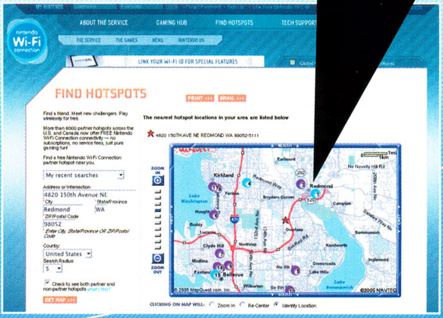

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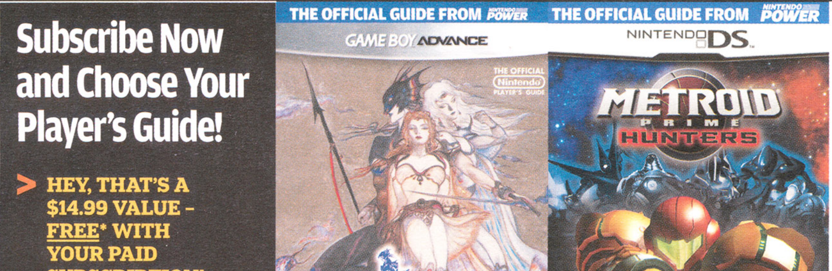
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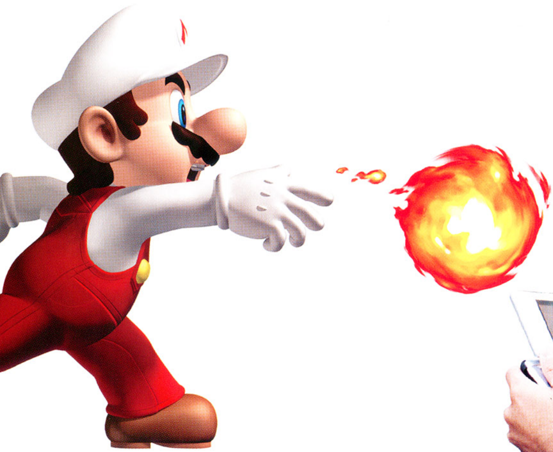

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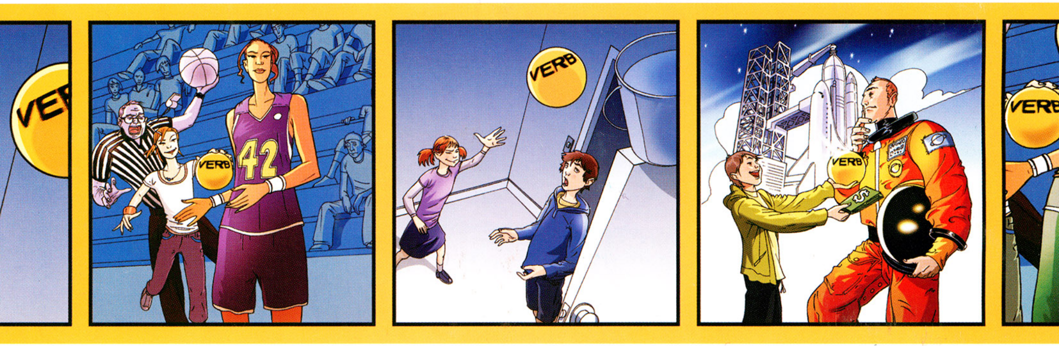

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